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Normal. What is normal? Is there a set of characteristics that define normal? These are questions we asked during meetings. We came to the conclusion there is no normal, and we are all different in our own right. Being different is beautiful and should be celebrated. People come in all different shapes, sizes and races. We all have different morals, beliefs and standards.

All of these differences we possess make us individuals, and in “The Normal Issue” my staff and I challenged normality by incorporating diversity in our storytelling. I learned through conversations with people, it’s important to not only discuss subjects throughout the black community, but other communities as well. All readers should be able to identify with something in our magazine. Through stories regarding the standard of beauty in fashion, the Native American Student Association and international students we give insight to different cultures and worlds.

On a final note, our country has experienced a great deal of race related issues and protests in the past several months. As a nation and a campus, we have recognized we may not be as progressive as we thought, but this is a time to stand together as a nation and not create a division amongst each other. Striving towards diversity in the workplace, class, media etc. is important to progressing as a society. If we stand divided we are less likely to create change.

Sincerely,

Kara Taylor
DREAMS BECOMING DIGITALIZED

by Toni Hunt

The aspiring artist’s direction has changed.
The waves and hugs from young teens with dreams filled with sadness and ambition turn to rapid fingers typing, clicking, and creating with an excitement that can be felt by someone on the other side of the room.

The aspiring artist’s direction has changed. Taking the risk of moving to an unfamiliar city has been moved from the beginning of the plan in exchange for laptops, in-home studios, software, and media sharing sites. Paying for studio time, bus tickets, and still facing the possibility of not getting signed has begun dwindling with this new media.

The fear of going out and performing to empty venues, exhibiting photography to an absent audience, and getting denied the chance to dance backup for your favorite artist is barely an option in today’s digital age. With the different uses of the internet, the power is in your hands.

The internet has played a huge role for our generation, and it is predicted to continue to evolve for the generations to come. It provides the opportunity to contact people across the world, to read days worth of information in the comfort of our homes, and simply to create.

In Cleveland, Ohio, there is little to no opportunity to be recognized, excluding a few places throughout the metropolitan area and in schools that offer art and music courses. The breakthrough artist usually feels that it’s time to get out and make a name, but people like clothing designer of Mental Ba$$, Alphonzo Jones, and rap artist Philip Lane, or Lo Life Lane, decided to stay in Cleveland to lay their foundation, with the help of a few colleagues, equipment, and the internet.

Alphonzo Jones: Clothing Design

Alphonzo Jones created a clothing line during his senior year of high school in response to reactions he received from his classmates after designing senior hoodies. “I loved the positive feedback and decided to take it from there.” Reflecting back to the beginning of his journey, Jones said two different forms of media helped him create. Research of two of the biggest artists, Jean Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol, and the use of Instagram, a photo-sharing network, inspired his creativity. Instagram helped him step it up a notch, providing the opportunity to share his idea. “Instagram was all about the visuals. I feel the best way to get product out is to see it, and that was what Instagram did.”
Lo Life Lane: Music

Another Cleveland native who has decided to take his art to the internet is Lo Life Lane. Lane has been creating music since he was in high school but did not believe it was the right time to perform his work for people. It was not until 2011 when Lane shared a freestyle on YouTube that people positively responded to his music. Then he began sharing his music on a variety of different platforms. “Twitter was next, Facebook, Soundcloud, all at the same time,” said Lane. “At the beginning I had a very small fan base, but now a lot of people like it.”

Along with his motivation, sharing his music on multiple social media platforms paid off, said Lane. He is now performing in different venues and people outside of Ohio listen to his music. “I got a few pays out in China. I’m pretty sure I don’t have a huge fan base out there, but I know they listen off of Soundcloud,” said Lane. “I have a few people listening out in Atlanta, New York, Cali, Seattle, and Texas.”

Lane said not only is social media helping him get his music out in different states, but it is also helping him get people from different areas in Cleveland familiar with his sound. “It helped reach out to people that I know I wouldn’t have been able to when living here. It helped get my music out to people around the city quicker.”

Being an aspiring artist, Lane knows that it is easy to get discouraged. He recommends using all the sources you can, like the internet, whatever you have to do.

“You gotta keep putting your effort into it. You can physically see a growth,” said Lane. “You can start from nowhere but gradually see evolvement.”

Herman Pulphus: Clothing Design

Lane wasn’t the only artist whose hard work began paying off with the help of social media. Herman Pulphus, a designer who relocated to New York from Cleveland, also began seeing growth in himself and his product. “I used Instagram for visuals,” said Pulphus, “Twitter to show more of a personal side of me, for personality.”

Pulphus knew he wanted to be a designer since he was in seventh grade and was inspired by Kanye West. Later Pulphus said his inspirations to create fashion came from Alexander Wang, Riccardo Tisci and Jerry Lorenzo. He said after seeing how successful they were, he began designing his own items.

“Why spend all types of money on others’ clothing when I can make my own?” he asked. “So I started designing.” After making his first samples of clothing in 2011, Pulphus put samples on Instagram. Everyone loved them, said Pulphus. “It sky-rocketed! It sold out,” said Pulphus, “Every time I put out something new, and they were only samples.”

Not only did people love his designs on social media, but he also met people who helped him mold his perspective. “I met someone named Jake Knows on Instagram who showed me a whole different take on fashion,” he said. “His advice allowed me to make my line more versatile.”

Pulphus said when he begins to launch his line, he plans to use social media to get his name out across different platforms. “I plan to have a website, a team to help run Instagram and Twitter, and to keep everyone up-to-date on collabs, events, and launches.”

Social media has been the door to open many opportunities for a variety of artists, including designers, musicians, and photographers. With the use of this media, more people will follow their dreams and won’t have to leave the comfort of their homes. But is this putting the record labels in trouble?

According to a Cleveland record label, Little Fish Records, the use of internet is boosting them just as much as it is boosting artists. Marketing, artist promotions, and even the promotion of their labels are being done with the use of the internet.

Reaching your dreams has been more adequate with the use of the internet and social media. Now artists can skip the uprooting from their homes and get straight to their dreams with the internet.
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Chasing Dreams Across Seas

By: Kiana Duncan

Subinner Aierken, a Uyghur girl, took a 16-hour plane flight, leaving behind her friends, family and hometown in Xinjiang to come to a place she had never been before. She came here to study broadcast journalism as a freshman, arriving Aug. 16. “I cried on the way over,” Subinner admitted, “I was so nervous.”

According to Le Kang, an international academic advisor, there are currently 929 Chinese students on campus, the majority in undergraduate programs, and some studying in the English as a Second Language program before enrolling as an undergraduate. ESL is required only for some international students, depending on how well they can speak English. Often times, understanding the host country can be easier done through interacting with students from that country, Subinner said. This is her first time interacting closely with other racial groups, such as Caucasian and African-American students. This is not just in an academic setting, but on a personal level, too. Talking to people on her dance team and hanging out with friends from other backgrounds have provided her with a more unique and personal view of different cultures.

Before coming to school here, she attended a university in Beijing for four years. “The people in the school there, they are all Chinese,” Subinner explained, “I’m the different nationality in China, I’m Uyghur. Chinese is my second language.” This has helped Subinner understand the benefit and experience of meeting people from all around the world. International events have helped introduce students to each other. Subinner has not only had the chance to interact with American students, but with students from all around the globe, such as Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Germany and Japan.

Breaking Barriers

“Even if sometimes we try our best to speak English, you know, even if sometimes we have some difficulty in expressing ourselves,” Subinner explained, “I feel like love is there.” Communicating has helped her get a better understanding, and she said she wishes that Kent State offered more opportunities for students like herself to become better acquainted with American students in the same kinds of events they have for international students. “We don’t mind, even if we can’t understand each other very well, but we will just [show] pictures or something, whatever we do, we just let people know what we want to say,” Subinner said. She has also made friends through everyday experiences, too, like living in dorms and just sitting in classes. Living in a residence hall has helped her gain a strong community of friends to lean on when she has difficulty in one of her classes or just wants to talk. Even something as simple as being able to text a friend for help studying means a lot to her, and makes her feel really lucky and appreciative, she said.
Leaving the Comfort Zone

Lots of people wonder why she has come so far from home and taken such a big leap out of her comfort zone, Subinuer said. One of the reasons she was intrigued to come here was that she connected with the way we love our freedom, and how it is portrayed here. Tianyu Wang, another Chinese international student, said many of his perceptions about America included iconic images like the NBA, Apple, Universal Studios, Hollywood, Harvard University and big cities such as Chicago and New York. “American culture indicates American people are more [about] individualism,” Wang said. Subinuer agreed with this in respect to Americans being themselves and exploring their own interests. Subinuer’s own perceptions were about freedom and power, but after coming here, she came to understand a different side of American traditions, such as Thanksgiving and our love of baseball.

As a journalism student, she also works at understanding the news better. “It’s really hard for me to listen to the news here. They speak really quickly and they have lots of words that I really don’t know,” Subinuer said, “I really want to understand the news, because I’m a broadcast journalism news student. I really want to understand what’s going on in the world when I listen to the news, listen to the radio, you know?”

“From my stand point, I believe the English language environment might be the biggest issue,” Le wrote, “Students are learning the English as a subject before coming, but how to use it on a daily basis is a different issue they are facing once landed US.” “You guys take maybe 20 minutes to read a chapter . . . for me it takes two hours,” Subinuer said. Language concerns Subinuer frequently, and she often worries about not being understood. She expressed her hope that communicating with American students will help her improve greatly. Wang said he had to spend more time studying to deal with the stress of classes. International students have also mentioned other aspects of class they’ve struggled with, such as the professor talking too quickly and not understanding certain words or expressions they use.
Overcoming Personal Struggles

For international students, there are many obstacles to face when arriving in a new country, which can affect aspects of everyday life such as grades, social life and mental health. This is most commonly known as the result of acculturative stress. According to a study by Williams and Berry in 1991, acculturative stress occurs when individuals experience problems arising from the acculturation process, or the transition from moving to one country from another. According to Noriko Toyokawa, a Kent State postdoctoral research scholar in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, there can be several different outcomes of acculturative stress, including effects on mental health, academic performance, friend selection, activity involvement, images of their own country or host country and career decisions after school.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are another thing that caught her off guard when moving to another country, Subinuer added. Overcoming assumptions such as “being good at math” and “only hanging out with other Chinese students,” has been an issue she’s faced. However, she’s glad topics like these are being covered in classes, such as when her College Writing class went over a paper about the dangers of the expression "I’m not racist, but . . . ."

Other problems students have described include not understanding the transportation system, reading menus, understanding class dynamics, adjusting to the food, slang, getting involved, finding resources and maybe even living independently for the first time. "I spent a tough time in the first couple months, and I tried to adapt to the new life," Wang said. "I’m glad I came here, I am more independent now."

Even at a school of more than 20,000 students, international students have noted the feeling of being overwhelmed and lonely. Many come here alone and do not know anyone upon arrival. Although international students face large changes when adapting to Kent State, international advisors make it clear that these students aren’t alone. Kent State provides many resources to help international students adjust, such as the Academic Success Center, Supplemental Instruction program, International Student and Scholar Services department and even student organizations reaching out have played a role in making international students’ lives easier. Academic advisors also help in getting these students involved in what they’re passionate about. From being in Kent Communication Society to the dance team, international students like Subinuer and Wang have found a plethora of activities here where they can meet other students and make friends.
New Friendships

“I feel so lucky, I have international friends here and American friends here,” Subinuer said, “I love meeting new people.” While she was getting ready to give a speech in her Introduction to Human Communication class, one friend stayed up until 5 a.m. to time her and give her pointers on her grammar. “I feel like as long as you like your friends, you like them and they like you, even if you can’t talk to each other at all, but a smile, a gesture, a hug, it means everything to me,” Subinuer said. Wang wrote that he has met other students while doing sports, at parties and in class, and that making friends played a role in helping him adapt.

A reason international students have stated they are willing to make such a huge transition is lack of satisfaction with universities back home. The academic rigor here is better, and the students are more focused. Subinuer even said she “got lost” in the sea of students back home. Wang wrote what he wanted was more of a worldview. “The people will [be] curious about why you’re here, that’s the most [frequent] question I’ve ever heard. People [are] very curious about this. If I were them, if I meet someone in China and they go abroad, I will ask the same question because I will think [about] why he chose to be there,” Subinuer explained. “Everyone loves their family, everyone wants to connect with their family everyday, because they are the people that really love you and support you, whatever happens to you, so I would [be] curious about that, too. I would really admire that kind of person.”

Students are very brave in coming here at a young age and are normally doing great making the transition, Le said. “I could have stayed in my hometown and gotten married,” Subinuer said, contemplating for a second before grinning, “but life is too short.”
Every day we walk this great land of America, and we take advantage of all it has to offer. We admire its skyscrapers, shopping malls and monuments to name a few things, but we rarely consider the origins of the land we call home. At this point, most have heard of the great bloodshed throughout our nation’s young history. Unfortunately, citizens of America stand on the bones, blood and tears of different ethnicities who died during the process of creating a land we call “great.” The indigenous people of this land, or Native Americans, are one of these ethnicities but are rarely acknowledged in today’s society. According the U.S. Census Bureau, Native American’s population was about 5.2 million in 2013, making up two percent of the nation’s population. This does not include Native Americans in combination of other races. Two percent. One may wonder how the population of the people who originally occupied this land is only two percent of the entire nation. Even though the numbers may seem low, the culture is still existent in certain parts of the country, and the Native American Student Association (NASA) is a campus organization striving to bring that culture to Kent State University.

Native American Student Association:
Preserving the Culture

by Kara Taylor
"I am half Choctaw and half Caucasian," Chris Lyons said. A senior nursing major, "My family didn't really talk about being Native American, because it was not really accepted." Lyons explained that Choctaws are descendents of the Canhokia who were located around the Mississippi River Valley. Choctaw later settled in Mississippi and migrated to Louisiana. The Choctaws were a part of the Trail of Tears and were later code talkers.

"For me, embracing my heritage gives me meaning and purpose, Native American is who I am and who I live. I will pass on to my kid. Everything about me is how I talk to how I look is a part of my heritage," Lyons said. Lyons's family are originally from Oklahoma and migrated to West Virginia in the 1950s and then to Ohio in the 1980s, where he was born and raised.

Growing up, he learned of his Native American heritage through his father and grandfather along with the school system.

"When I began learning of my heritage in school, I felt there were pieces missing. I was pretty much the only ethnic-looking student in my school," he said.

Lyons said he remembers The First Thanksgiving and Columbus Day were taught quite differently in his household than in his Rittman, Ohio School District.

"In my household I vaguely remember hearing The First Thanksgiving was to celebrate a victory Europeans had for killing a few Native Americans. They killed an Indian chief and put his head on a stick, and for about ten years, they kept that stick and celebrated every year," he said. "As far as Columbus Day goes, he did not find America and was not the best man."

Throughout Lyons's childhood, his father and grandfather would travel to powwows. He would listen to the music, watch the dances and ask questions regarding the culture. Around the young age of six or seven, Lyons knew he wanted to be involved in his Native American culture.

James (J.D.) Chancellor's story is a bit different. Growing up in an area where he was engulfed in his Native American culture, it was a shock for him to now be in an area where most people have little to no knowledge of the culture.

Chancellor is from a small town in southeast Oklahoma called Clayton. He grew up on the Choctaw Tribal Land.

"When the Choctaw were moved to Oklahoma, they were given tribal land. I lived in the ten and half counties of Choctaw land," Chancellor said a graduate higher education and student personnel major. "We have tribal police who patrol our land, and people privately own their land, like my family owns the land we live on."

Tribal land is quite different from reservation land. Reservation land is exclusively governed by a tribe, so the American government cannot infiltrate without going through the tribe first. The government does not have to work through a tribe to make changes in tribal land.

When the Native American tribes were relocated by the government, a large chunk of the eastern tribes such as the Choctaws, Seminoles, Cherokee, Chickasaws, and Cree were Americanized. These are known as the Five Civilized Tribes, because they entered into a new agreement with the government stipulating they would give up their land.

"During the Trail of Tears, we lost a lot of our culture and our people during the relocations; when you are moved from your land, you lose stuff," Lyons said.

Native American children were sent to boarding schools by the government who taught them Christianity and English, which also contributed to a huge loss of native culture.

Chancellor's great grandfather was forced to learn English and abandon his Choctaw language during the Americanization process. This affected later generations in several Native American families, and the language is now lost, because there are no elders left to pass it down.

Along with other minority groups, Native American culture is not heavily mentioned in history textbooks. This lack of education regarding minority groups could possibly lead to misunderstanding another's culture.

"More of my negative experiences that I encountered came from just a lack of knowledge of the Native American History," he said.

Chancellor works with NASA to promote awareness of the group and to help bring Native American culture to Kent State's campus.

Chris Lyons, current president of NASA, says the basis of NASA was to give a safe haven for Native American students, some place where they can have the right forum to discuss, learn and teach others that Native Americans do exist.

"Our population is on campus, but it is really hard to find everyone," Lyons said. "We are really looking at cultural awareness and membership increase."

Lyons said NASA wants to be more self-sufficient and not fully rely on campus funds. The organization works towards hosting more events than just their annual powwow.

"Those that scream the loudest get heard, and we have a lot of trouble trying to navigate the political system at Kent State," he said.

"There's only a few people who know how the campus works, but we should be equally supported; our advisor is fantastic, and she works very hard to get things done for us." Lyons said there are a lot of small groups that do great things, but they don't get the recognition because they are so small. Kimberly Kennedy, the advisor for NASA, said when she came to campus seven years ago, she barely acknowledged her Cherokee and Blackfoot heritage. Through watching the Native American students on campus and realizing how proud they were of their culture, she became interested in exploring her culture.

"Personally, in seeing how the group really likes to connect with the community, I see a lot of people reaching out and really wanting to be a part of the organization's events," Kennedy said.

People come from Cleveland, Akron and Canton to sing and dance with NASA during their events.

"They have definitely reached out and connected with the community, so now people are asking where and when and how they can get involved," she said. "Seven years ago when I came, this was not the case, so we have definitely made great progress."

J.D. Chancellor believes cultural preservation comes through education, and minority cultures show the true uniqueness of America.

"We lost a lot of culture, and that is why NASA is so important to college campuses, and why higher education is so important for Native Americans," he said. "If we start educating ourselves and educating people about ourselves, then we can better preserve our culture."
The Senior Honors Thesis/Project is an independent research, creative or applied project completed under the direction of a faculty member. Students who work closely with faculty though the process have unique advantages in demonstrating their scholarly commitment.
Fashion has seen many changes from the 1920s through the present. Each decade has had a different effect on society in a positive or a negative way. "Today we are very celebrity conscious, and that is not necessarily unique, because we have always had top-down influences," says Jean Druesedow, who serves as the Director of the Fashion Museum at Kent State University. We have always been influenced by something over the many years, whether it was the war or the most famous celebrities. Sit back and relax as we journey through the fashion evolution from the roaring 20s and back to the future, into the 21st century:

1920s Roaring Twenties
1930s-1940s The Great Depression and World War II
1950s The Postwar Era
1960s Flower Power
1970s Saturday Night Fever
1980s Material Girl
1990s Minimalism
2000s Back to the Future [http://www.tufts.edu]

**20s**
Coco Chanel was one of the most influential designers of this decade. She was a French designer and founder of the Chanel brand. She was known for making more masculine looking clothes for women, because she felt it was more comfortable than what women were used to wearing.

**60s**
The 60s were a time when an economic boom was happening, continuing from the last decade. People had a little more control over what they wore, depending on their social class. It was a time when there were a variety of popular styles that continue to influence us today, many of which were the mini skirt, mod style, the hippie movement, retro dresses, capri pants, etc. For example, the hippie movement brought bell-bottom jeans and tie-dyed shirts while expressing peace, love and equality. These changes had a dramatic impact on the industry, as they changed their focus to young adults.

During this time, the television had already been created, but it became a bigger influence on people's lives by creating dynamic social changes that had a major impact on the fashion industry. As the number of households that owned a television increased, so did the desire of young people for more choices in the fashion industry. People got to see their favorite celebrities or musicians expressing their own style and wanted to be able to replicate or create their own style from it. The same attitude lies within today's youth, as we strive to express our individuality and choices through our clothing.

**80s**
This decade was called material girl for a reason; according to www.tufts.edu, the increased use of credit cards encouraged spending. During the 80s the movie "Wall Street" came out where Gordon Gekko said "Greed is Good" and all the men wanted to wear power suits. Not only was this the era of the material girl, but also the era of money and power. On the other end of the spectrum, there were women who wanted to wear the Don Johnson look from "Miami Vice," which was a t-shirt under a designer's sports coat, a pair of linen pants and loafers. This was also the music take-over decade when people like Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Princess Diana were the trendsetters. MTV was also a big part in that by showcasing the many artists in music videos showing the different fashion styles. Never before had the entertainment industry had a bigger impact on fashion until this decade. Not only were people influenced by what they saw, they now had the ability to go out and buy it using their credit cards. This allowed people to express their choices in fashion much faster because of the ready-to-wear aspect that was also taking over the fashion industry.

**2000s**
"This decade is strong evidence that fashion is cyclical" (www.tufts.edu). All the trends that we are sporting today are new and revamped styles that were used all through the 20th century. This is really a unique time with even more unique people. Young adults are starting to wear whatever they want, no matter what society tells them to wear. Celebrities in the next few decades have no boundaries to what they wear. What is acceptable for them isn't always acceptable for regular people. "I definitely feel that they are more free to try out different things and not be judged about it, and even if they are, it won't be for long because they are more of a trendsetter then anyone else" (Rashan Arnold, Jr., a Kent State Fashion Merchandising student).

The 2000s have seemed to positively affect the young adult generation by helping them understand how to be themselves and only themselves. They haven't affected every generation the same way. Television has become more reality at this time, and usually these shows don't create a positive atmosphere. People fear that they are damaging the children of this age. Beyoncé and Rihanna are two big icons of this century and kids look up to them. Usually when they are performing or at different events, their clothing choices are risky, which could cause young kids to think they should dress like that to be noticed like these celebrities are.

Fashion has evolved over time and impacted the world in many different ways. Starting when fashion was based off the economy to being created by our favorite global stars, clothing has become more relaxed and accepted. Fashion can only go so far, however, and new things can't always be created. Although we say we want our own style, fashion is limited; there is only so much you can do. Whether you feel you have been positively or negatively affected by fashion, it will always play a role in your life. It's what you do with the information that you are give that's important. You should create your own fashion—don't let fashion create you!
Whether you are a fashion student here at Kent State University’s Fashion School or just a trendy fashion enthusiast, getting your hands on the latest issue of Vogue or Harper’s Bazaar is always exciting. It may be the perfect excuse to tailor your day around flipping through its fashion-forward pages.

You delve into the glossy, captivating images of high fashion models adorned in magnificent designer styles. Reveling in the luxury that Vogue has to offer, you find yourself at the end of the issue. If you analyzed what you were seeing, you may have noticed spreads of pale, frail figures with little space devoted to minority models and designers. With the exception of the beautiful Lupita Nyong’o or Rihanna, it is rare that you will find full pages of high fashion or commercial faces with any trace of African American, Asian, or Latino ethnicity.

I took it upon myself to develop a clear analysis of the fashion industry’s acceptance of minorities by conducting a small experiment. I found the largest, most recent Vogue magazine I own, the September 2014 issue, and began my research. I flipped through the entirety of the magazine to analyze its content. Of the 856 pages, there were 80 pages that displayed or featured 57 different models, entertainers, or everyday people who are noticeably of a minority background. That’s roughly 9% of the magazine. 31 pages (about 4% of the magazine) featured minority individuals on a full page by themselves, with only two minorities featured together in one 10-page spread. Full pages were given to featured entertainers or “faces” of designer brands (i.e. Lupita, Rihanna, and Beyoncé). Otherwise, full pages are often granted if there are multiple models (usually Caucasian) present in the photograph with them. Whether or not this is an attempt to display diversity, there is certainly a disparity between the small trace of it in Vogue and the great cultural diversity growing in America.
"...It is rare that you will find full pages of high fashion or commercial faces with any trace of African American, Asian, or Latino ethnicity."

Younger generations and the rise of minority populations are supposedly paving the way for greater acceptance. As a result, cultural shifts in values and perceptions are contributing to the greater acceptance of diversity in all spheres of society, including fashion. Consequently, these changes are presently impacting our cultural consciousness, self-concept, and confidence. But are these changes being reflected in mainstream fashion and media? While the minority population is gradually becoming the majority, we are noticing that our beloved trend-setting fashion industry is lagging behind in representing these demographic and cultural shifts.

I had the privilege of discussing the issue with Dr. Tameka Ellington, full-time fashion design professor at The Fashion School, and Dr. Amoaba Gooden, Chairperson and professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies here at KSU. What is causing this discrepancy in the fashion industry? According to Dr. Ellington, money is part of the issue. "Magazines are a profitable business... if white is selling, that is what they are going to use." Designers and magazines have to focus on making a profit and often “white models are the money makers,” contributing to the lack of minority exposure in mainstream media. Dr. Gooden agrees that “Money equals power [and] is connected with this idea of who/what we think is beautiful.” She adds, “The mainstream is just people in positions of power,” and therefore [they] have the money to control the images we see.

It can also be attributed to the basics of marketing. As in any business, market segmentation is crucial to effectively meeting different consumer needs. If a magazine is trying to reach a white consumer market, it will cater to them by using mainly white models in its publications. Market segmentation then leads to separation. As in my study, models in the September 2014 Vogue were predominantly white. “In fashion magazines like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar, [they] hardly ever talk about African American designers,” as I discussed with Dr. Ellington. However, "Vogue realized there was a gap in the industry and created Vogue Black that features all African American designers and models" in the industry to reach the fashion-forward African American consumer segment. I mentioned this version of Vogue to Senior Fashion Merchandising Student and Vice President of KSU’s Body Acceptance Movement, Kelsea Freeman. “[An] all black Vogue? That really worries me... I don’t know why it has to be separate.” As a fashion student, she finds it startling and “weird [that] we don’t really know about [it]. I’ve never seen [it] at the store anywhere.” Dr. Ellington continued to point out that “It’s actually not a U.S magazine. It’s Italian. It shows [the U.S. is] not progressive enough to have [its] own.” In my discussion with Dr. Gooden, she stated, “people want something to affirm them if they are not being affirmed elsewhere,” and in this case, there is not enough diversity being represented in the mainstream.

Consequently, magazines and media cater separately to these groups. With so much cultural growth in our country, it’s a shame that the fashion industry in America is not on the same level as European countries in terms of cultural exposure. Even more alarming is that, as minorities, we have to deal with this segregated media exposure so we are able to see faces that look like our own.

Lastly, perhaps the most significant factor contributing to misrepresentation is continued stereotyping. According to Dr. Gooden, in all forms of media, “there is a propensity to stereotype.” This is true in the fashion world. As I saw in my Vogue experiment, black models were often dressed in street clothes to depict urban, relaxed styles rather than styles of elegance. “There is this idea that as a person of color, you’re not into high fashion... you’re more urban, more casual,” says Gooden. Dr. Ellington affirms that these “unrealistic images expand across all races.” She stresses the importance that “our main thing as a minority population is to be strong enough to break the stereotypes. Stereotypes are very real. We have to be careful in how we allow those stereotypes overtake who we are as people.”

We have seen how money, marketing, and stereotypes are impacting minority exposure in mainstream media globally, but how is it affecting us here at home and on our own campus? Campus-wide, “Kent State...
...has a huge diversity push. [It] is a lot more diverse than when I was a student here, even here in the Fashion School,” says Dr. Ellington. As a top fashion school, it is important to analyze how our fashion school not only contributes to the diversity of our entire university, but also how it compares to the overall fashion industry.

When asked whether or not student work in Rockwell reflects a variety of cultural influences, Dr. Ellington explained, “Most of the [students] doing the representing of anything racially diverse are the ones that are.” As a senior Fashion Student, Kelsea Freeman also agreed that we could use more cultural influence in the Fashion School. “[There’s] definitely room for growth [for diversity] in the fashion program,” Freeman says. She asserts that “the professors do a pretty great job in trying to show us different things in the classroom, but it’s hard when the industry is showing us all white models [and] when the examples we have aren’t that inclusive. . . . [Professors] have to show us what’s there.” This is due to the fact that “institutions are part of the system [and are] often mirror images of each other,” explains Dr. Gooden. We are not seeing as much diversity in the fashion program because it is a reflection of the overall fashion industry.

Somehow these issues “[need] to be managed in a culturally competent way,” according to Dr. Gooden. Dr. Ellington believes “it’s going to be a slow process . . . as the demographics change, a lot of things will have to change.” Dr. Gooden speaks from a different perspective, justifying that “shifts in our world have more to do with ideas. We see the world as very dichotomous . . . weak and strong; black and white. Until we can conquer those divisions, there won’t be change.”

If we cannot be affirmed in mainstream media, it is imperative that we work towards internal affirmations starting with our own self-concept. “Self-concept . . . has always been an important determining factor in how you dress yourself; a determining factor in how you behave in society; a determining factor in how people view you,” says Ellington. “Self-concept and self-efficacy have much to do with how successful you are [and] what you believe you can actually accomplish because of your self-worth.” In her research on self-esteem as it relates to fashion and African American women, she found “that when it comes to self-esteem, most of the time minorities have higher self-esteem . . . the women tend to be more accepting of who they are.” Kelsea Freeman, as President of the Body Acceptance Movement, strongly supports the idea that self-esteem and confidence are crucial factors in accepting yourself and spreading positivity to help others. She explains, “I’m a big believer in small things having a ripple effect . . . breaking out of that mold and your own stereotype . . . can give you a whole new perspective on the world.” Believing in our own self-worth and getting involved to educate ourselves and others on minority issues here at KSU could be the start of that ripple effect. On a larger scale, “The research continually shows the more educated you are, the more accepting you will be,” of yourself and others, Gooden mentions. If we can carry with us this internal confidence and the education that has empowered us, only time will tell whether or not our generation will have a lasting cultural impact on the fashion industry and media. Until then, “the struggle continues.”

"WE SEE THE WORLD AS VERY DICHOTOMOUS...WEAK AND STRONG; BLACK AND WHITE. UNTIL WE CAN CONQUER THOSE DIVISIONS, THERE WON'T BE CHANGE."
... but for good reason?

There has been a growing distrust between America and African Americans. The police-involved shooting that left 18-year-old Michael Brown fatally wounded in Ferguson, Missouri has allowed for a discussion about race that we have not had for quite some time.

Brown, who was killed by Officer Darren Wilson of the Ferguson police department, sparked protests and mass unrest in the small town in Missouri. Businesses and buildings were burned down in the aftermath of the grand jury’s decision not to indict Officer Wilson.

The level of tension between blacks and law enforcement has heightened due to similar incidents in New York City when Eric Garner was choked to death by police on video; and in Cleveland, Ohio when police shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice to death on video as well.

The issue of police violence towards blacks has spread beyond Ferguson, reaching other cities like Philadelphia, New York City, Cleveland and even the District of Columbia.

In the beginning of the 20th century and after Civil Rights legislations, blacks have seen a level of inequality that was so egregious, it still lingers today, but in a different form.

In truth, it should not take moments of crisis and dismay to drive the conversation surrounding race relations in America, because there has always been a problem. Opinion polls show deep divides between blacks and whites on everything from the role of race in Ferguson to the appropriateness of responses by protesters and police.

In fact, most whites had a different outlook on how race relations between blacks and whites were perceived before the Brown incident. And for the most part, it could be because whites lack black friends. Robert Jones of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), as a part of their American Values Survey, asked respondents to name seven of their friends and answer some demographic questions.
In a 100-friend scenario, the average white person has 91 white friends; one each of black, Latino, Asian, mixed race, and other races; and three friends of unknown race. On the other hand, the average black person has 83 black friends, eight white friends, two Latino friends, zero Asian friends, three mixed race friends, one other race friend and four friends of unknown race. PRRI's data also showed that 75 percent of whites have "entirely white social networks without any minority presence." The same holds true for slightly less than two-thirds of black Americans.

There are explanations that could explain the reason for whites having 91 white friends. It could be because there are simply more whites than blacks in the U.S. and as is the case for most races, blacks and whites tend to gravitate to people who look like themselves and share some of the same values.

The potential problem with not having a number of friends of various races is the lack of diversity. If whites do not have black friends and vice versa, understanding racial issues will continue to be woefully underappreciated.

The widening gap of racial inequality between black and white Americans in society today is troubling. A number of statistics show that blacks are falling behind whites in a multitude of categories, which is becoming identical to the Civil Rights movement that transpired more than a half-century ago.

Over the course of time, minority groups, particularly African-Americans, have been subjected to an inferior status by the enforcement of laws that adversely affected them. The abolishment of the Jim Crow laws in the South was intended to establish a level playing field for African Americans, but some of the same barriers still exist.

Dr. Nicole Rousseau, author of several book chapters and journal articles on the subject of Black identity and Black women’s sexuality, says the plight of African Americans is important in analyzing statistics between them and whites. She talks about being an African-American girl raised on the north and south sides of Chicago, where expectations were not for her to go off to college and obtain her bachelor’s, master’s and eventually PH.D, but in fact she said the expectations were the opposite.

"There are options that become available to some groups that aren’t necessarily available to other groups because there is a cycle," Rousseau said about the differences in historically black and white families. “In order to achieve those goals [of going to college], I had to take out student loans and work diligently both inside and outside the school.”

“What kind of schools will a black child who’s been educated in public school in a place like Chicago living on the Westside [and] going to the public schools have available to them? What kind of college will they even be admitted to? In fact, will college ever come up for them? Let’s say it does, [but] they are not going to go to Northwestern. They are going to go to a community college, they’re going to go to a Chicago St[ate] university if they are lucky.”

Rousseau highlights one of the most important issues plaguing the black community and that’s education within the public school system.

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Rousseau highlights one of the most important issues plaguing the black community and that’s education within the public school system. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil rights has found that schools serving the most black and Hispanic students are less likely to offer rigorous subjects such as calculus and physics and more likely to employ teachers with only a year or two of experience. The findings, which were collected in 2009-2010 by the Education Department, included the following: Black students were more than three times as likely to be suspended or expelled compared to their white counterparts, and white and Asian students were disproportionately overrepresented in gifted and talented programs—comprising nearly three-quarters of enrollment in such programs—while black and Hispanic students were disproportionately underrepresented.

Educational attainment has a profound impact on your earnings potential throughout your lifetime. Given blacks typically underperform in education, income will be affected as well, which is normally contingent upon your level of education.

INCOME DISPARITY WIDENING

The income disparity between African Americans and whites is also concerning. In a 2009 analysis by the Pew Research Center, the median wealth of white households is 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households. When the housing bubble bursted in 2008, it had more of an adverse impact on minorities than whites.

From 2005 to 2009, inflation-adjusted median wealth fell by 53% among black households, compared with just 16% among white households. The median net worth of black households in 2009 was $5,677, while for whites it was $113,149.

The number of blacks living in poverty is three times as many as whites, the Pew Research Center’s analysis showed. In 2011, 9.8 percent of whites were living in poverty, compared to over a quarter (27.6) of the African American population.
There is a correlation between education and income and the likelihood of being employed. The unemployment rate for blacks and whites has always favored white Americans. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has released job reports for the last 42 years, and black unemployment has always been higher than white unemployment.

In the August job report of 2014, 11.4 percent of blacks were unemployed compared to 5.3 percent of whites. The rate of unemployment for black Americans five years ago, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics was only 66 percent higher than that for whites, due to the recession that helped increase unemployment for every American.

That was the smallest difference in 42 years. In February 1989, we saw the largest difference, when the unemployment rate for blacks was almost three times that of whites—11.9 percent to 4.3 percent.

Earlier in this article, I suggested racism has taken on a different form than in the past. Traci Williams, a professor at Kent State University and former student here, talked about how racism has evolved into an institutionalized form—unable to be seen—compared to when she was in school and it was thrown in her face. “The concerns are the same but the face of it has changed,” Williams said about racism in today’s era.

Williams added that the advent of social media has been able to take these situations of race and make them bigger social issues, which she said blacks could benefit from. “It is a very different dynamic for your [generation],” Williams said. “You have so much information, and it is another source for holding people accountable.”

“I think that, as a mom, I can’t imagine what these families are going through,” Williams said in regard to recent use of violence against blacks. “However, I hope we look at these situations and say, okay, we understand that there is a problem; let’s stop theorizing what the problem is . . . and work with the people we need to work with and make some real changes.”

Williams said blacks should not be mute on certain situations and in an uproar the next. “We need to make sure that we value you [and] every life that is lost, not just when someone who doesn’t look like us hurts us,” Williams said. “We need to show the world that we value the lives of our people as well.”

Opheila Everett, president of the NAACP’s Akron Branch, said the black community is lacking leadership and needs to come together. One of her biggest goals before she leaves her position as president is to implement block clubs throughout the city of Akron and hopefully beyond. “We can put the community in place to be involved in our city, because they will be there knowing they have leadership in place in their community . . . and keeping those that shouldn’t be there out.”

Everett said we can’t wait until something bad happens to speak out. “We need to be more together,” Everett said, “not to wait until something happens.”

We need to be more together  -Everett
Imagine yourself in a meeting with your boss and several coworkers...

where you all are bouncing ideas off one another to find a solution for a specific problem in the company. You stay quiet and think up ideas on your own, while the very loud and obnoxious coworker sitting next to you yells out every idea that comes to his mind, but none of them work. Now imagine, in the privacy of your office you are speaking to another coworker about an idea that you think would be the best solution for the company. Your obnoxious coworker eavesdrops outside your door, and when you’ve finished explaining your idea, runs and tells your boss the amazing idea, claiming it as his own. That coworker is promoted as a CEO for the company because your idea worked so well, but you haven’t gotten any credit for it and he feels no remorse.

How would you feel?
This is the same thing that has happened to African-Americans for generations. New trends in music, fashion, dancing and even body shapes have been heavily influenced by the African-American community, but the credit has not been given to the originators.
Music

While watching the 2014 Grammy awards, many predicted that hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar would win for Best Rap Album but were shocked when white rapper, Macklemore, won. Hip-hop enthusiasts considered it a slap in the face to the black community, which started the music genre, that this white man who rapped about a thrift shop won over one of the most critically acclaimed albums in recent years.

Eugene Shelton, Journalism and Mass Communications professor, said that it is nothing to be upset over and that Macklemore won because there is “power in numbers.” “It's just a matter of economics,” he said. “There are more white people than black people. There are young consumers who no longer associate this music with African-Americans, because it's coming to them from a white artist. It's not to say Macklemore is better than Kendrick, but he's exposed to a much larger crowd to sell more records.”

He said that the same thing happened in the 1950s with Elvis Presley and Rock 'n' Roll. He said Sam Philips, the founder of Sun Records, loved the sound of black music but knew that it wouldn't sell to white audiences. To compromise, he found a white man with a black sound, and thus the “King of Rock 'n' Roll” was born. “I would say Eminem is the Elvis of hip-hop, because he is the highest selling rap artist among thousands of black rappers,” he said. “And before him it was Vanilla Ice who had the most successful hip-hop record with 'Ice, Ice Baby.' It's all in the numbers.”

Mwatatu Okantah, a Pan-African Studies professor, agrees with Shelton that blacks have been copied for generations, and added that some of the white artists of today wouldn't be as successful without black artists helping them out. “Without Dre, there could be no Eminem. Without Usher, there could be no Justin Bieber. N Sync, the Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears all owe their musical roots to African-American R&B and Soul icons.”

English professor Linda Piccirillo-Smith is an Italian-American woman, who although considered a white woman, was raised to believe that Italians didn't associate themselves as part of that larger white community. “Internally, I feel a separation with the white community who aren't Italian, so I can stand back and really see everything for what it is in America,” she said. “I resent the fact that African-Americans in general tend not to be as often acknowledged for accomplishments, or it seems an exception rather than the rule.” She said that it frustrated her to see Macklemore getting all the credit for what someone else started. “It's crazy because you're sitting there watching the Grammys like 'how is this happening?' and 'why are these people not acknowledged but these others are?'

Dancing

During the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, pop star Miley Cyrus wowed fans and shocked others when she stepped on the stage and supposedly started the “new” dance craze, twerking. The only problem is, the dance isn't new. Entertainers like Beyoncé and Rihanna have been dancing this way since the beginning of their careers, but it wasn't until Cyrus did it that it became mainstream.

Shelton said that because she had the eye of white America, which is a bigger audience, Cyrus had more power to influence people who never paid attention to twerking before. “Perhaps they didn't understand it when Beyoncé did it, but when Miley does it, she makes it acceptable for everyone to do,” he said. “It was too black when Beyoncé did it. Now it can be a white thing.” He added that in most trends, dancing included, mainstream America needs a white person to open the door and say, “You can do it now. . . . You can be a rapper, you can dance, you can do whatever you want, because this white image that we see makes it acceptable and, as I said before, there's power in numbers.”

Piccirillo-Smith said that Cyrus represented this “thing” and was trying to market herself in a new way, and to do that, she stole what she thought would get her the most attention. She said that Cyrus was disrespectful to the community that had developed that style of dance and tried to make it hers in the most exaggerated way.
Fashion

In October, Elle Magazine called Timberland boots the new Birkenstocks, overlooking the fact that the boots were a winter-staple for the black community in the 1990s. Besides the boots, cornrows and durags (head caps) have made their way into high fashion. Durags have even been renamed “Urban Tie Caps” as a way to make them seem more high fashion. These trends have been passed down for generations but have just recently caught the eye of fashion experts.

“When looking at the fashion industry as a whole,” said Piccirillo-Smith, “The majority of people who control the industry are still white. I don’t know how many people within that industry would have been paying attention to a marginal market, the African-American market.”

She said that when looking for something different, fashion experts saw these trends that worked in a certain community for years and adapted them to see if another community would buy into them the same way. In other words, they saw a trend, used it as their own and took all the credit and the mainstream money.

Christina McVay, a Pan-African English professor who is also a white woman, said that white people are a little slow on the uptake and probably didn’t even know some of these things were going on in the black community. “It sometimes takes us a while to catch on to new trends,” she said. “It’s just like the use of slang, African-Americans started using certain slang terms years back, and you’re just recently hearing older white women using that same language. Years ago, you would never hear an older white person saying ‘chill’ or ‘cool,’ now they do, and that’s because of the black community.”

Body Shape

There was a time when having a big behind was considered vulgar and overly sexual to women who were not part of the African-American community. Now, celebrities like Kim Kardashian, Jennifer Lopez and Iggy Azalea have introduced this “new” world of curves. Singer Meghan Trainor’s “All About that Bass” idolizes women with curvier shapes, even saying “I’m bringing booty back.” Where did it go in the first place?

Piccirillo-Smith said that Italian women tend to have thicker hips and thighs, but it was never acceptable, and they couldn’t be thin enough when she was growing up. “By finally getting to the point where having a different type of body type is accepted as attractive is a benefit, because it’s like finally people think it’s a good thing,” she said. “Then on the other hand, why did it take so long to be accepted, when people have been shaped like this for so long?”

Gene Shelton said that even though black women had always celebrated having a curvier body, it was something that was always objectified by other races. “It was viewed as something that wasn’t a part of the white standard of beauty,” he said. “You wouldn’t see Ms. America with a big butt, but when Kim Kardashian and Jennifer Lopez glamourized something that has already been done, they said, ‘It’s OK, white woman, to have this shape.'”

With diverse cultures in America, some wonder why African-American trends have been copied so often. McVay has a simple answer. “I think blacks are the biggest trend setters in America,” she said. “All throughout history, they have been imitated by people who felt themselves superior to blacks.” Some may also wonder, with the influence of the African-American community on pop culture, why black culture is so popular, but black people don’t.

“A lot of these issues have to do with the complexity of race in this country,” Piccirillo-Smith said.

She said that there is a lack of acknowledgement, that white people won’t admit that they really want to be like black people, but think that it’s a bad thing, so they take things from the black community to make it their own, therefore making it acceptable. Shelton said that it all goes back to the fact that a dominant culture will take whatever it wants from a smaller culture and have one of its own glamorize and showcase it, thus making it acceptable.

“Imitation is the greatest form of flattery,” Shelton said. “But the problem is that there are so many people who are naive enough to think this was originated or introduced by them.”

Okantah said that rather than concerning themselves about who is or isn’t giving them credit, or how others see them, African-Americans need to worry about how they see themselves. “Blacks need to realize that everyone is studying them, but they aren’t interested in studying themselves,” he said. “I would like the black community to realize that their imitators see beauty in them that they don’t even see in themselves.”
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top ten stories

by Breyanna Tripp

01 EBOLA

The 2014 outbreak is the largest Ebola epidemic on record, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). According to the CDC, it affected multiple countries in West Africa, resulting in more than 8,500 deaths and more than 22,000 cases. There were several cases in other parts of Africa and the United States. Kent State University Alumna Amber Vinson contracted Ebola while caring for the first patient who died from Ebola in the United States. Fortunately, Vinson was declared Ebola-free after proper treatment.

02 POLICE BRUTALITY

From Mike Brown to Eric Garner, who died as a result of police brutality, African-American males could not catch a break in 2014. In Cleveland, 12-year-old Tamir Rice was shot and killed by a police officer outside of a recreation center. Rice was holding up a toy gun, but the officer said he was responding to a call that said a male was pointing a pistol at random people. His death has been ruled a homicide.

03 ISLAMIC MILITANTS

On April 15, 2014, Boko Haram Islamic militants abducted more than 200 Nigerian girls from school. In a video statement, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau threatened to sell the girls into slavery. The organization continues to terrorize the people of Nigeria.

04 EXPLOSION

An explosion occurred in January 2015 outside of the Colorado office for THEM National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Originally, the FBI was investigating the case as a hate crime, but the suspect told investigators the NAACP building was not his target.

05 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Republicans took over the midterm elections. They won control of the Senate and the House of Representatives. This makes it a difficult time for Democrats, including many of the changes President Barack Obama wants to implement such as immigration reform.

06 DIPLOMACY

President Obama announced the United States will take steps to restore full diplomacy with Cuba. This will end 50 years of the United States isolating itself from the communist country.

07 PROTESTS

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych decided to reject the European Union's economic deal regarding an association agreement and accepted Russia’s $15 billion deal. Thousands of protesters demanded the resignation of President Yanukovych and the Ukraine government reacted violently; Russia eventually used military force. According to the United Nations, from mid-April 2014 to Feb. 5, 2015, at least 5,486 people have been killed and 12,972 wounded in eastern Ukraine.

08 ISIS

The Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is a militant group. In an effort to take over Iraq and Syria, they have kidnapped, killed and forced many in the region to convert to Islam. They have also posed a threat to other countries. Since September 2014, ISIS has released several videos of the beheading of hostages. On Feb. 11,

09 ACADEMY AWARDS

All of the actors nominated for the 87th annual Academy Awards were white and neither a female director nor writer was nominated. Ninety-four percent of the academy is white and 77 percent are males. Congratulations to John Legend and Common for winning the “Best Original Song” for “Glory” from the movie “Selma.”

10 LEBRON JAMES

Lebron James announced his return to the Cleveland Cavaliers for the 2014-2015 season. The Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office reported his return would create at least 500 new jobs and bring an additional $33 million in revenue.
My Story

I remember when this African American guy told me via Twitter “all black girls were as ugly as dirt.” It stayed with me for a very long time because for him to say that to me. I was so hurt that I cried, and I didn’t even know this boy. I was a mixture of confused and angry because I didn’t understand why he had felt that way or what lead him to such a cruel conclusion. How someone would classify a whole race of women into this horrible stereotype. I never quite understood why so many people feel black girls are ugly, and I’m not sure I ever will.

Personally, as a darker woman I have prayed to God to make me lighter, so I would not be bullied or treated poorly. I wanted Him to make it easier for me to be an African American girl in this society. I was not considered as pretty as the lighter girls during my childhood, and I was treated horribly all because my skin was darker. I loathed my skin color and wanted to change it. I desperately wished I had my mother’s light skin instead of my father’s dark skin. In some ways I resented my father because of it.

As I got older, my Caucasian friends made me appreciate my skin complexion, while my African American peers made me dislike it. Now that I am older, I appreciate my skin color regardless of what others think and would not want to change it for any reason. As I have matured, I have realized you cannot determine beauty, intelligence and integrity based on complexion. Beauty has often been associated with complexion in the African American community, and having fair skin has been deemed more beautiful than dark skin.

“Beauty is just a small piece of a much bigger animal, and until we understand that much bigger animal, we will not understand the issue of colorism,” said Cheryl Grills, psychology professor at Loyola Marymount University and speaker in Dark Girls documentary.

Colorism

Colorism is the prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. There have always been subtle messages in our society that have given darker women the idea they are unattractive. The way darker women are portrayed in media and the negative connotations associated with having dark skin have created racial barriers. In today’s society there is a growing racial boundary amongst African Americans. The argument regarding which type of African American is better, light or dark has been relevant since slavery. When slave masters began reproducing with slaves, a mixed race was created and named mulattoes. Mulatto slaves were considered more valuable in terms of trading, because they had European features. Centuries later this still corrupts the minds of African American children, who grow up with these ideals imprinted into their minds. This has made it difficult to achieve equality within the African American community.
Some times I feel uncomfortable around other black people, because I was always treated differently; people called me the Oreo and said I want to be white, but that’s not true," she said. "This is my skin color. I’m not going to change that, it’s not possible to change that, it’s just part of who I am."

Light-skinned African Americans are often challenged about their complexion, many times by whites, and African Americans are suspicious of their color. Along with the dark-skinned stereotypes, there are light-skinned stereotypes, such as being stuck up, and conceited, as well as overly sensitive and emotional. It is a very confusing situation for light-skinned African Americans, because they have to pick a side, to accept their black heritage or disown it, and neither is entirely welcoming to them. They sometimes feel as though they do not belong to a specific race, because some could belong to either.

"I just feel they (black people) don’t feel comfortable around me so then I feel like I don’t really belong with them," Latisha Ellison said, a freshman public relations major.

Many people have preconceptions of both light and dark blacks before they even know them as people.

"Sometimes I feel uncomfortable around other black people, because they don’t look at me as one of them," Ellison said.
THIS IS LINCOLN.
“The new Annie is black, but viewers of the trailer on YouTube, both black and white are seeing red.”

When most people think of movies starring African-Americans, they think of the many films about slavery or characters that are forced into subservient roles, like *Django Unchained*, *12 Years a Slave*, and *The Help*. Aside from films about slavery, or a film by Tyler Perry, black moviegoers don't have a lot of options to see empowering characters. However, there are a few movies that effectively show racial problems and have progressive African-American characters.

The fiery young orphan who just wishes for tomorrow is back but minus the curly red hair. *Annie* stars Quvenzhane Wallis as resilient foster child living in New York in 2014 with her mean foster mom Miss Hannigan, played by Cameron Diaz. Annie’s hard-knock life is about to change when tycoon and New York mayoral candidate Will Stacks (Jamie Foxx) is advised by his VP and sneaky campaign advisor to take her in.

The new Annie is black, but viewers of the trailer on YouTube, both black and white are seeing red. Surprisingly, some blacks are predicting the film to be a flop. They did the same thing to *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Wiz*, and *The Honeymooners*, both of those failed miserably. “I don’t get it. How can they make such a drastic change? That’s not the Annie I grew up with,” says another black critic.

There are three things that writer and director Dee Rees told the audience of the 2011 Out in Africa: South African Gay & Lesbian Film Festival they shouldn’t say in a pitch: “black,” “lesbian,” and “coming of age.” The independent film *Pariah* isn’t the typical coming-out or black film. Although it addresses homophobia in the black community, the film’s message is about the essence of being. Brooklyn teenager Alike struggles to live up to her mother’s expectations, while trying to figure out where she fits in as a young lesbian woman and budding writer.

In Spike Lee’s 1988 film *School Daze*, an unpopular young man nicknamed “Half Pint.” Spike Lee wants to pledge to a popular fraternity at his historically black college but is discouraged by politically active cousin Dup (Lawrence Fishburne). Issues presented in the film, like colorism and hair texture, are still relevant in today’s black community.

In Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*, Sal Fragione opens the pizza parlor he’s owned for 25 years, located in a now primarily African-American and Hispanic neighborhood. What begins as a simple complaint as to why there are only pictures of famous Italian-Americans on the wall, when most of the customers are black, leads to racial divide and violence.

*Remember the Titans* starring Denzel Washington is about a newly appointed African-American football coach at a suburban Virginia school that has been forced to integrate. The film depicts the nature of racism in peoples’ lives and shows how common passions can pull people together.

There are very few films that portray black men as positive father figures in their children’s lives. There are even fewer films that show them succeeding without athletics. *The Pursuit of Happiness*, starring Will Smith alongside his son Jaden, is based on the true story of Christopher Gardner, who has heavily invested in home density scanners, but they don’t sell as planned. As Gardner tries to figure out how to sell the devices, he loses his wife, his house, and his bank account. Forced to live on the streets with his son, Gardner fights for a stockbroker internship.

“...Issues presented in the film, like colorism and hair texture, are still relevant in today’s black community.”
BEAUTY ON A BUDGET: DUPES FOR THE COLLEGIATE DIVA

By: Victorria Sanders

As college students, we face financial burdens with the sky-rocketing costs of tuition, fees, and textbooks on top of an immense pressure to make the grade. As women, however, losing our beauty sleep over these stresses doesn’t mean we have to look like we are. We all want the best products that the luxe beauty market has to offer, though they tend to be detrimental to our finances. Every once in a while splurging is acceptable, but often the market’s best-selling, quality beauty products are impractical due to our miniscule student budgets. Looking fierce shouldn’t have to cost an arm and a leg. Luckily, many cheaper substitutes of exceptional quality exist for our favorite cosmetic, hair, and skincare products. Through a little research and some personal trial and error, these beauty dupes for the industry’s trendiest products are sure to help the collegiate diva look and feel beautiful on a budget.

Products & Comparisons

**Freeman Charcoal & Black Sugar Facial Polishing Mask** ($3.39, ULTA)
*Comparable to LUSH Dark Angels Black Sugar & Charcoal Cleanser ($31.95, LUSH Stores)*

The handmade, natural cosmetics trend is on the rise along with their extravagant prices. Freeman’s luxurious, exfoliating Charcoal & Black Sugar Facial Polishing Mask is as gentle on your skin as it is on your wallet.

**e.l.f. Mineral Foundation** ($5, www.eyeslipsface.com)
*Comparable to BareMinerals Original Foundation ($28, Sephora)*

Don’t let BareMinerals leave your bank bare. E.L.F. Mineral Foundation with SPF 15 is the perfect dupe for light, barely-there foundation in a wide range of skin tones.

**Suave Skin Therapy Body Lotion with Aloe** ($2.83, Walmart)
*Comparable to Hempz Original Herbal Body Moisturizer ($23, ULTA)*

Nourish and soothe your skin all year round without paying through the nose when it’s time for a refill. This moisturizing dupe will keep your skin and your budget looking beautiful.

**e.l.f. Studio Cream Liner** ($3, Target)
*Comparable to MAC Fluidline Gel Eyeliner ($16, MAC Stores)*

We know school gets in the way of your beauty sleep and funds. Keep your wings on point with e.l.f.’s rich, radiant, and reasonable Studio Cream Eyeliner.

**Shea Moisture Curl Enhancing Smoothie** ($9.79, Target)
*Comparable to Carol’s Daughter Marula (Curl Therapy) Softening Hair Mask ($24, ULTA)*

Tame, define, and soften your curls with Shea Moisture’s all-natural, aromatic, and affordable Curl Enhancing Smoothie.

“All of the ingredients are organic so I’m not in the dark about what I’m putting in my hair. It smells great and it gives me the definition that I want for my twist outs. Taking advantage of BOGO deals at Target, CVS, and ULTA helps me save money while also using high quality, name-brand products.”

— Chloe Moore
Junior Managerial Marketing Major
Hair. Hair? Hair!

By: Toni Hunt

“IT’s only hair” is what I told myself as I carefully began combing out my luscious locks I patient ly grew for four years. As the metal rat tail comb went through the naps and tangles of my locs, I grew anxious and indecisive, but in the midst of all my emotions, I was excited. I was excited for change.

At the age of 16, I decided I wanted to lock my hair. I didn’t think twice about it. My two older cousins, mother and daughter, both had beautiful locs, and I was amazed at how stunning they were even with such a male dominated “Rastafarian” look. I wanted to carry myself as they did, so I decided it was what I wanted. I already was looked at as different as a teen, so I wasn’t afraid of people judging me, but what I wasn’t prepared for were the different approaches, such as being looked at as my peers elder, I gained when having locs.

As my locs began gaining length and thickness, I bleached them, dyed them and tried many different styles, my favorite including pin curls and bantu knots. But as I grew older, my self-perception began to change. Of course, I still felt “different” because I never really fit in, but my locs didn’t suffice the feelings I had inside about myself anymore. I didn’t want to be judged by my hair and, as I mentioned earlier, the way I was approached was strange, which I narrowed the reasoning down to my hair.

I wanted my hair to be versatile, like I feel I am inside. If I wanted length I could add length, if I want natural kinks and curls, I could do that. And most importantly I wanted people to know me as Toni, not “Toni with the dreads”

Four long years of dedication began getting picked away with Cantu leave in conditioner, a metal-ended rat tail comb, a recycled bag from the grocery store, and patience. I traded my Mango and Lime wax in for Organix Coconut Milk shampoo and my metal clips to hold down my locs during retwisting in for Ion flat irons. I knew that combing out my locs would be beginning a new chapter of my life, and although I was a little apprehensive, I was ready and...

It’s just hair.
You won't find my role model in a history textbook
You won't find her on the cover of “Time” magazine
You won't see her on the news or even on the cover
of the local newspaper
But you will find her in a small town near
Cincinnati
See, the thing about her is that she won't glorify
her success
She lets her success speak for itself
She went to the College of The Streets
And got a bachelor's degree in Wisdom
My role model is someone who is the definition of
a strong, independent, African-American Woman
You know the ones you see in the Tyler Perry
movies, she is that and so much more
At one point in time she was the Mom and the Dad

She struggled to keep her family together
Made sure they had everything they needed
Made sure that when they came home
the lights came on, the water was running, and food in
the kitchen
She did this all while having little to no income
Never had her hand in the welfare pot
She toughed it out on her own
And by looking at her family you would never have
even known
I mean you are the one who is on the outside looking
in
My role model shaped me into the person I am today
Every day I wake up and think that I do this because
you never got to
But this poem isn’t just dedicated to my role model
It's dedicated to your role model as well
To the women who have to be both mom and dad but
they make it work
To the women who put in the long hours so their
family has what they need
And what they all want
But mostly this poem is dedicated to you
Who is my role model?
She is my mom

BY INDIA DOVE
The code I follow has its rewards
but the cost of what's lost is priceless
A young man that has a plan
to elude his vices, sustaining
all the levels of niceness
the torture of promiscuity looms
in the corridors of my mind,
to which a villain lurks deep to
unleash a plague of seductive
wordplay and tantalizing touches
Rollin emotions and smoking
pure intentions like Dutches
as I master the mechanism
between her sacred walls.
Though I plead with my conscious
which seems pompous

When it comes to erogenous endeavors, The “ID”
promotes its unleashing of guilty pleasures
whispering “go ahead and conquer, inject and direct while
she’s lost in pleasure as the tool of discovery digs deep
looking for treasure, the dark deb looms of memories will
change the imagery of man forever.
For this romantic illusion will leave contusions on her
heart, the satisfaction of detachment begins as each
stroke peruses through the waters entitled “pandora”
This being within desires sin as if it’s essential to mental
manipulation, the elation of penetration reveals a sinister
minister whose demented gospel topples her skin
spreading its infectious arms to tussle in the war of this
lucid cardiac muscle, obliterating any evidence of a once
cohesive puzzle, foaming at the mouth like a wild dog
without a muzzle, he aims to bring pain and a state of
chaos, Dismantling her bra, in awe I see gods of Egyptians
description, Rah and Horus, as I pour the elixir -- I kiss her
sabotaging any future relations, he roams the night in sight
of innocence, it replenishes his menacing mannerisms, as
the sun rises, he retreats fearing the reflection in the rays of
solar reconciliation,

Awaiting his departure for another orgasmic slaughter,
a relational martyr
Beware of the glow in his eyes for it sees the meek and
it’s sweet to his taste
Just wait, or it may be too late
Now you’re a slave to perpetual indulgence.

Signed, the big bad "Villain"
The next person who tries to escape will be dead; person number two

I heard a few shots, calmly

Eyes on the dock; my pupils were glued

Mind reeling as the dramatic ensued

3 cameras, 3 angles; 3 perspective, 3 different angles

That number and a gun in my soul

It was a hot summer day around 2

Security guards with handkerchiefs tried to stop the bleeding of their teeth

Frankie heads vibration on the stone floors beneath

Made them lay down with hands overlapping threads of hair sticking into nervous domes

I said, "Calibers of this magnitude weren't in print

But calibers of this magnitude were in print

Palm married to the magazine

A scene they were all accustomed with

It was a routine thing were all familiar with

Room full of hoarded stared

No one instinct or moved a muscle

I was a trigger of monstrous hundred of gleaming squares

Overtook my tangible canary

Defiantly

A metronome stood in the blood-stained cavity

(click, click, click, click)

Knocking against one another, persistently

Calcite bones within became a pendulum

Like a stymied bear on the beach, mournsness ingested

Seeped into the index skin of my index finger

While

A voice, "Don't put that blow down! Now everybody shut the fuck up and don't make a sound!"

My hand trembling wrestle deep in neurosis

My feet rubbing ankle-deep in water

(Insipred By: Peter Blair's Planting Rice with Nippon, Ubo Province)
The Division of
INFORMATION SERVICES presents...

2015 Student Knowledge and Job Fair

Learn about student jobs
Information Services employs over 100 KSU students

Talk to hiring managers

Submit applications
All majors welcome!

Friday, April 17th
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Kent Student Center
Room 309

For more information contact Jackie Jimison at jjimison@kent.edu.
THE PORCH WITH DESK CHAIRS

We were the globe,
we were the around the world in one night type,
we were the never scared, never fearful,
we were the four months out of
a year,
see you a year from now,
give it a year,
a fucking year.
You know how many times
I would have taken you
around the world in
a year?

We were the one time during that party,
one time in the backseat
on the way to Walmart,
one time four months ago,
a year?
Don't leave like that again.

We were the punch line,
last class on Friday,
I looked forward to us,
you looked forward to us.
We were peanut butter and honey
banana melt, preheat the oven and
pretend it's ready—
take a bite when it's too hot,
"Babe, take a picture of me in your slippers."
We were the porch with desk chairs

We were parking across the street,
7 am fist full of quarters,
we were fog
and groceries for my mother,
we were the third time I missed the exit,
you never cared if I missed the exit.
We were the ones who looked like friends
but we were not friends.
We were the planet forty four thousand years from now—
the seraphic gooey but weightless
sappy and bright
flashing gasses,
grey glowing,
we were beyond that.

We were the weeknights and the
“Baby, it’s 4 am and I’m sorry for callin’ but I just . . .”
Ignore button,
speaker phone—
We were red light, green light.
“Gotta charge it:
I’ll talk to you in the morning.”

We were the pub at 2 pm,
Speaker phone—
We were song covers,
loud in the living room,
speaker phone

We were the January morning,
called it off.
We were the families,
opposites of sorts,
we were one in one,
with one,
the favorite student,
and the introvert.

We were the secret stash,
desk drawer,
the only drawer,
never enough room,
we (you) were cramped,
crumpled,
spot and caught.
A year’s worth of writing,
thrown away,
revise, write.

We are the exploding desk drawer,
foggy and spinning,
and still,
we are.
RACE RELATIONS ON CAMPUS

When I stood outside the Kevin Hart demonstration last semester in solidarity with other Kent State students who were sick and tired of seeing young people being murdered with impunity in our nation's streets, I was met with a white student yelling, "Shut up! No one fucking cares!" I think boiling beneath the surface of that comment was really an admission that the student, personally, did not care because it was not something that they had been socialized to care about in the first place.

In the same vein, note the recent BUS/USG debacle: a black senator jokingly commented on being nervous around a lot of black people being in the USG office which was jokingly agreed upon by a white senator. This confusion of humor coupled with racial insensitivity became the catalyst that illuminated the serious need for racial competency amongst students. I found it astounding that the resolution to the issue was to create another committee as though institutionalizing the issue can be fixed by "diversity" committees. This was especially troubling considering that BUS representatives were more than willing to educate USG on how the issues surrounding race have transformed since the days of burning crosses and hanging nooses (though being shot in the streets is still a possibility).

THE NEW FORM OF RACISM

Racism is now micro-aggression, language, and in the way some are quick to silence those of us who dare to speak out against it. In many ways, it's like a sickness that many are unaware they are suffering from.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

We are all part of a system that we did not set into place, but the real question becomes what will you do with your position in it? I am Mexican but I am fair skinned. I benefit tremendously from the ability to pass for white. This affords me certain privileges. But I have made it a personal life-long commitment to daily dismantle this system that currently privileges me in the first place. I do not need to critique the phrase, Black Lives Matter, because black experiences, histories, and identities do matter. Acknowledging that doesn't simultaneously erase other struggles including my own. If anything, it illuminates better understanding and equips one with better tools for systematic dismantling of all oppressions.

AMANDA ANASTASIA PANIAGUA

RACE RELATIONS ON CAMPUS

As a journalist, part of my job is exposing myself to the inner workings of the university. I had met and spoken with members of those who were involved in the USG debacle. I do not want any side to be antagonized in what happened. Many were misguided, others outraged. Many wanted to blame that on individuals, rather than a system that has failed them and was never intended to serve marginalized students. By removing individuals, you don't fix these structural problems, you only make the process slower in helping everyone, and the problem comes back full force.

THE NEW FORM OF RACISM

We cannot attack the people who don't know what they are doing. We are in an institution, a place where there is higher learning all around us. We are not our parents, we are our own people, we are the millennials and our racism is institutional racism. Racism is no longer the shape of a dark cloud blotting out the sun of righteousness. Instead, the cloud has turned into a dark hazy vapor that seeps within the ground and condenses on the windows and glasses with which we see through. We breathe that vapor unknowingly as it poisons us. We cannot fight this sickness by directly as we did in the past. It is a much more clever disease than ever before because it is not one person or a group of people. It is an ambiguous and vague virus. And at the same time we cannot rely on leaders like Martin Luther King or Malcolm X. They are heroes of a past age. The best way that we can combat this new racism is by attacking it institutionally.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

As a black man who has always been around a lot of white people, I started to be a fly on the wall, observing the manifestations of a society that quickly snap to attention upon my entrance into rooms. I grew up with the white kids telling me I'm white, the black kids calling me white, and my parents showing me I'm black. White privilege is a buzzword others claim defines an argument to antagonize white people with misguided guilt. But its a term that explains the systematic perpetuation of the hierarchy in race. There is no other phrase that sums up racial insensitivity better than White Privilege.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

There has been an intense "Us vs. Them" narrative that is counter-productive in what we are trying to achieve. In addition to being black, I am Native American, and this latter racial identity is one of the least represented. When I discovered I had ancestors from the Cherokee Nation, I was fascinated and wanted to learn more. I found that simply having a fraction of one's race in your blood doesn't give you permission to a culture. You have to earn and acknowledge the culture to claim your identity in it. As a member of the Native American Student Association, I have been active in the local Intertribal Native American Community and do what I can to support them. In turn, I have been accepted and have been treated not just as part of their community but as a member of their family. We must all accept the responsibility to learn about other cultures outside of our own if we plan to access those spaces in any form.

BRUCE WALTON
YOUNG TROUBLED MINDS
As we sat in The Uhuru Office expecting nothing less of an interview, discussions ranging from Flying Lotus albums to visual design communications filled the walls over classic D'Angelo melodies. Our favorite duo, Young Troubled Minds, and the staff members indulged in a wholehearted conversation that led up to an interview that will have you at the edge of your seats. Get comfortable as we talk to *Au and Black of Young Troubled Minds* and get an exclusive look into the inspiration of their latest album and more.

**Uhuru:** It's understood that you like to produce your own music, so what artist and producers would you like to collab with in the future?

**YTM:** Kanye, off top. That’s the homie. Kanye inspired me as far as work ethic. J. Cole, Flying Lotus and also Daft Punk. As well as Pharrell.

**Uhuru:** Who are artists or key figures that inspired you to become musicians?

**YTM:** Daft Punk, Kanye and Young Jeezy. That’s like the weirdest combination of artist but those three artist I think kind of molded me into the artist that I am today. Daft Punk is free and lively, Jeezy’s realness and his grittiness, and Kanye for not being afraid to be different. As far as rapping goes, J.Cole...J.Cole is the homie. Wale, Lupe...but as far as the feeling of the music we grew up in the church so Gospel as well. It’s a big influence for us.

**Uhuru:** What type of festival crowd would have the best reaction to your work?

**YTM:** Woodstock *chuckles* Anybody who is all about zoning and psychedelics. If you are all about the love, all about the peace and thinking critically...but just that feeling of love being the bases of our message and having a goodtime.

**Uhuru:** What’s your favorite part of rhyming? Why do you love it? Or what about Rap excites you the most?

**YTM:** Me personally I love the hook. I love the chorus because it’s the central thing that brings the song all back together. The verses could be everywhere, but the chorus brings it back together and that’s what people remember the most. I love feeling. I love hearing a beat and then figuring out how it makes me feel. I focus on that more than rhyming and metaphors. We want people to feel us. I don’t want you to listen to us and hear rhymes. I want you to feel us. I can be saying one word the whole time, but every time you hear that word you feel it.

**Uhuru:** You sampled, Aaliyah on your album One Big Session. Is there anyone else you would want to sample?

**YTM:** It’s a lot. We have a lot of new stuff with samples and stuff yall are going to like that. But we love the 90s as you can probably hear in One Big Session. It’s very melodic and there are a lot of good vibes like it was in the 90s. So yea anybody in the 90s I’d love to sample. But I’ve also sampled a lot of new artist too. There are songs that dropped last week that I’ve sampled just because I feel like with
Internet cultural we can really expand our horizons as far as what we’re listening to and what we incorporate into our music. We want to go in the gutters and sample the old lady who has the pipes, and she’s just singing a song about goats, or something like that and we just sample that song. We’re trying to sample stuff that no one else will find.

Uhuru: What message do you want fans and people new to your sound to take away when listening to your music?

YTM: That we are Young Troubled Minds. Our minds are everywhere we aren’t perfect. We’re trying to figure out life. We’re young, so we have a lot of different feelings and we express them in a lot of different ways. We really don’t want anyone to categorize us, but just take us as we are. Take away from us to be human. You may hear one song and it’s extra conscious and the next song may be about a relationship. But at the end of the day we are all of that. You can’t keep an individual in one area of living. So to deny one half of it is to deny my humanity.

Uhuru: What do you feel like is the standout track on your new album One Big Session?

YTM: “Zone” feat. Leo Light was the starting point. It was the blueprint and foreshadowed everything we needed to do. If we couldn’t have songs that were equivalent or better than “Zone” than we might as well not have made a tape. From the vers off the beat, to the emotion...it just felt like it was it.

Uhuru: Are there any lyrics you would want younger kids to relate to now or years later?

YTM: She got the power, and she don’t even know it! All she gotta do is tell a n*gga she aint on it. All he gotta do is find a b*tch he can f*ck in the meantime/ that’s the real reason why she worried/ that’s the real reason that she f*cking on the first night/ that’s the real reason she aint leaving in the morning/ and I know he told you it was love at first sight but that n*gga just horny.

We put our life into the music so other people can live the experience by listening to the words. And because we are being honest and genuine, its implacable their lives. All the words we say are something I want people to take with them.

by J.Markell Cole, Toni Hunt, Jazmine Woods
With a nationally award winning student media collective that includes The Daily Kent Stater, TV2, Black Squirrel Radio, KentWired.com and several student-run magazines, one would suggest that the College of Communication and Information serves as the gatekeeper for the Kent State student body. But is the college doing its best to demonstrate diversity? Valerie Williams believes so.

"JMC is working hard to improve diversity, and one way I see that is through the Student Voice Team being created. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication classes are even beginning to require one assignment based on diversity to be included in the curriculum." Williams, a sophomore and Broadcast Journalism major, holds the position of Music Coordinator for Black Squirrel Radio and is a part of the new Student Voice Team through JMC.

Created in 2013, The Student Voice Team is an advisory group built on the improvement of diversity in the School of Journalism and Communication. The highly intelligent and diverse group of students that provide a voice for the student community is advised by Center of Pan-African Culture director Traci E. Williams. Thor Wasbotten, director of Journalism and Mass Communication, envisioned a body of students that had a direct line of communication with him. "With a broad definition of a diversity, the goal is to give people a voice and make them feel like this is a place for them," says Wasbotten. "When I put together the Global and Diversity committee I told them I wanted to create a student advisory group. I wanted them, as the committee, to be able to help build this and gather a large cross section of what makes our school what it is." Because of her passion for the cause, Wasbotten appointed professor Traci E. Williams as faculty advisor.

Being able to see the world through a different lens can not only enrich perspective, but provide a balance and understanding of culture through dialogue. Studies show that diversity creates personal growth, critical thinking, and helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions; Rather than their skin color, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, religion, age and social class.

The School of Journalism and Communication believes that this is how you achieve the highest level success and recognizes the importance of diversity.

In July of 2002, four academic programs joined together to create The College of Communication and Information.

The Programs Include:

- The School of Communication Studies
- The School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- The School of Library and Information Science
- The School of Visual Communication Design
There have been complaints from student organizations and students who feel the college could be better at demonstrating diversity through student media, senior and Public Relations major India Hines believes it goes both ways. “I got involved because I felt it was crucial to my success. Kent State organizations including student media provides great experience that employers wants to see,” said Hines, who is also a member of the Student Voice Team. “We (students of diversity) sometimes criticize organizations about not being diverse, but we do not actively seek out to break those barriers. I felt like I owed it to myself and other students who are different to not let those barriers hold me back.”

Efforts to improve diversity have been recognized by JMC director Thor Wasbotten. Washbotten has been praised by students for realizing there was a problem in JMC and forming the Student Voice Team with hopes to make this an inviting learning environment for everyone. “It’s hard admitting that things are not how they should be, but ignoring it is and still not is the answer. SVT has a few initiatives that we are currently working on to change the atmosphere,” says Hines.

To help ensure diversity within the school of Journalism and Mass Communication, members of the SVT have met with faculty and are pushing to be a part of classes to give a five minute talk about the Student Voice Team and why it is important to have on campus. The SVT has been a part of the Student Success Week where they hand out free food and engage with students about what it is the Student Voice Team is about and how they can stay up to date on future initiatives to build diversity. Most recently, The SVT hosted an uncensored student discussion that allowed students from all majors and backgrounds to voice their opinions and concerns with the state of student media today. The goal of the uncut student only event was to forget political correctness and have an adult conversation in a safe place on issues concerning race, gender, religion, student media, sexual orientation, and international students.

Using the hashtag #SVTRealTalk, the SVT incorporated social media into their innovative discussion, pushing the boundary on freedom of speech. Through different events like the open discussion, the SVT isn’t just defining who they are as a student medium, but helping the School of Journalism and Mass Communication understand themselves – it’s something Thor Wasbotten applauds. “Whether it’s advising me on different curricular, or policies that we have within the school to help make it more inclusive, these are all things that they are charged with doing.” Students who want to express their interest in the Student Voice Team can either talk to a team member or the faculty advisor, Traci E. Williams. Spots are limited being that the goal of the advisory board is to keep it sustained and manageable.

"With a broad definition of a diversity, the goal is to give people a voice and make them feel like this is a place for them," says Wasbotten.
Alyssa Hall supervises a program that uses mentors to guide students on the road to success that will ultimately lead to graduation.

Nine student leaders gathered in a circle Thursday, September 4, in the Student Multicultural Center on the second floor of the Student Center for a training session that would spark their passion to help others as mentors in the Connect2Complete program.

Hall said that the program seeks to help African American, Latino American, and Native American (AALANA) students to defeat stereotypes that have been perceived for them and provides a mentor for the students to connect to that will help them on the road to graduation.

Hall is graduate assistant in the Student Multicultural Center and planned icebreakers and activities that allowed for the mentors to get to know each other on personal levels, partaking in them as well.

Hall directed students to focus their attention on a bright orange colored sheet of paper that she handed them. On it, each mentor was instructed to write down a number that meant something to him or her.

As the mentors took the time to write the numbers down, Hall also wrote her own number down.

Without hesitation, questions or numbers the students were instantly cooperative with Hall’s directions. Once the mentors and Hall were finished, they would reveal their numbers and why they were chosen.

Some numbers were short. “21,” global communication major Olivia Thompson said.

Some numbers were long. “626,927,232,015” another student said, stumpng his fellow colleagues. As the mentors tried to decipher the coded number, they didn’t complete the complex puzzle. The male student, who asked to stay anonymous, said.

“June 26, 1992 is my birthday,” he said. A mentor had guessed that, so it didn’t come as a surprise to them. “I’m a firm believer in karma and good luck, so that’s what the seven is for. 23 was my volleyball number, and 2015 is the year that I graduate, but it’s also the year for me to really leave my mark here at Kent State as a senior.”

“Why’d you choose that number, Hall asked.

“I know what you’re all thinking, and yes, a lot of the more adult-like fun things happen when you’re 21, but that is not why I chose this number,” Thompson said, revealing that she is in her senior year, preparing for graduation, and that she celebrated her 21st birthday this year while she studied abroad in Spain. “I’ve already had the chance to do so much this year, and I really think it’ll be a very great year for me.”

The student revealed that his motivation for involvement in the program is wanting to connect to with a student and affect their life individually in a positive way before graduation.

It was the next activity where the mentors connected with each other on a more vulnerable level.
Hall directed them to reveal a sacred object for him or her to share with
the other mentors, bringing her own sacred object to share as well.
As the mentors revealed their objects, why they’re so special to them, and
how sacred they are, Hall felt a sense a pride in knowing that the mentors
she selected were wholeheartedly willing to reveal personal stories.

When it was Hall’s turn to present her object, she stood up, faced her men-
tors with watery eyes and took a deep breath.

“I may cry,” she warned her fellow mentors.

As echoes of “it’s ok,” and “you can
do it,” filled the room, the sense of
affection and support from her mentors
gave her the strength to continue.

“I wear this necklace as a reminder of
who I once was, where I used to be,
and why I’m no longer there,” Hall said,
clenching her silver necklace with a
pendant attached as she fought tears.

“That’s what I want you all to keep in
mind during this program. We all have
a story and so do these students."

Hall elaborated to her mentors:

The mentors continued to give Hall
their undivided attention as she spoke.

“I was just like you all not too long
ago, sitting in these seats and helping
students succeed. I know that you
wouldn’t be here, if you didn’t care,
and won’t always be easy. These
students may be tough, resistant, but
it’s people like you that can really get
through to them and show them that
someone on this campus really
does care for them.”

As Hall revisited her journey from high
school student, undergraduate college
student and current graduate student,
her passion was evident.

Not every single one of us have the same path, and
not every single one of us have been through all of
the same things that the students have…

... but you’ve all grown as leaders and
I believe could be very useful to
these students.”

Hall’s passion for her helping others
became evident.

“I care so much for this program, be-
cause it was programs like this one
that really helped me, and I’m sure a
lot of you as well,” she said.

As she gave a presentation to the
mentors about her hopes and dreams
for the program, some of the stress
that Hall is going through was brought
to the spotlight.
"This could be the last year for this program, and we have a lot of ground to cover," Hall said.

She explained that the program had trouble reaching numbers and ratios for mentors and mentees, and that not everyone in the Kent community sees the program as useful.

Hall is excited to start the year with her mentors and mentees and is looking forward to growing through the experience as well.

"I can learn a lot from these students," Hall said. "There are things that I can be taught from them and how they work with their mentee and with each other."

"We have to show people that we are actually making a difference and impact."

"There is money being put into this program, and if that money isn't used, then what's the point in continuing what it is going towards," Hall asked rhetorically.

Hall continued to elaborate on the community service acts, and volunteer work that the mentors will do alongside their mentees, featuring an alternative spring break trip to Cleveland.

Pamela Jones, National Student Exchange coordinator, led sessions at another training for the mentors and Hall and said that Hall is doing a great job as the supervisor for this program.

"I have seen Alyssa act in previous roles on this campus, and I know her potential," Jones said. "She will definitely do a great job with this program this year."

As the mentors laughed in the corner of the room, causing a distinct disturbance, a smile spread across Hall's face, a sensational feeling growing inside of her knowing that some of these mentors had never interacted with each other before the training session.

"I know this is going to be a great year for this program and I can't wait to see the growth in these students and myself at the end of this journey."
The Fee-for-Free allows all full-time, undergraduate, Kent Campus students free admission to most theatre, dance and music events. Reservations are required. Tickets can be obtained by calling 330-672-2787 (ARTS) or stopping by the Performing Arts Box Office (PABO) in the lobby of the Roe Green Center at 1325 Theatre Drive. Simply show your Flashcard and get your free ticket.

For a calendar of events, please visit www.kent.edu/artscollege.
I crossed Summit Street around 6 a.m. to get to the Schwartz Center on a somewhat warm Friday morning in February, carrying only an overstuffed backpack and regret for forgetting to bring a pillow. The sun wasn't up but the usual abundance of street lamps provided enough light to keep this area of campus in a perpetual dawn in the sun's absence. My professor, Traci Williams, told us to be in the Schwartz Center parking lot by 7:00 a.m. She warned us on several occasions in our Black Images class that the bus would leave for Detroit with or without all passengers, if we didn't make it on time. I had already paid $130 for the mandatory trip, so I wanted to make sure I got my money's worth.

Last February I was finally able to get into a class that I wanted to take for some time: Black Images. In 2013 a black student I had met with to discuss one of my columns told me he had just taken the class, and that it would “open my eyes to so much about racism in the media and entertainment.”

And so I took his advice, but I was sadly disappointed for the first few weeks. The material was very insightful, and I just wanted to talk about some of it, but the other students were not very sociable and asked no questions. Some of us didn't know what to say, even myself at times, and the most people did was hold up their hands to talk about a story or just to agree about a talking point. However, I had hoped this trip would be as life-changing as it was advertised.

The bus pulled into the parking lot a few minutes later. After the early comers and I started settling in, Mrs. Traci asked some of the men to help load the coolers, ice, and snacks. Once the rest of the class was seated, we began our long journey.

THE JIM CROW MUSEUM OF RACIST MEMORABILIA

After six hours, we finally reached the Detroit area and Ferris State University’s Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, a museum dedicated to the racist items found all across America. After braving the tough winter winds to enter the university’s library, we went through a small foyer and downstairs to the entrance of the museum. We didn't know exactly what to expect, but the entrance had a glass display case of racist Native American memorabilia, no doubt put there to prepare us for what was to come.

We first met the eccentric but entertaining David Pilgrim, the curator of the exhibit. We all gathered in a small room with a painted mural of all the famous black civil rights figures. While Pilgrim was giving us a lecture before letting us into the exhibit, he turned his attention to me, feverishly writing down as much of what he said as I could for the article I was planning to write about this experience. That was when he asked me a question I
wouldn’t forget because of the lesson it was attached to:
Why was I writing everything down.

“Well, I want to write this as an article for Uhuru, our
school’s multicultural magazine.” I said.

After ribbing me for telling him about a magazine he
already knew about and actually was once included in,
he asked me, “Why do you want to? Do you
think you can’t?”

“No,” I said, “I just haven’t done it yet.”

“If you want to do something, just say you’re
going to do it.”

I loved that notion. It wasn’t that I was wrong in what I
was doing, but my approach was not correct, according
to my own aspirations. It’s a problem that I believe we
have in black culture: Our perspectives are so hopeful
that we never get done what we intend to. It’s only a
difference in a verb that can change our whole outlook
in life. It’s the difference between a
dream and a plan of action.

In the museum, we saw minstrel show actors—black-
face actors—and cartoons, a postcard with crowds of
people watching a black man being beaten, portraits of
black people being lynched, their bodies hanging above
a crowd of smiling white men, women and children.
We’ve heard such things from textbooks and maybe in a
small paragraph of our history books, but it’s a different
monster altogether to see just how accepted this way of
portraying black people was, not just in the south but
all over America. Many of my classmates looked sick,
disturbed and uneasy, but I was already familiar with
the photos so was more interested in the caricatures,
cartoons and comics of black people.

I saw beastly, big, red-lipped, tar-faced monsters, not
quite animals but not quite human. They were dull,
dim-witted and hardly clothed themselves properly,
only concerning themselves with eating, rape and
subservience to those “more intelligent and civilized.” I
had to keep reminding myself that this is what people
thought I was, what a black person was.

THE CHARLES WRIGHT AFRICAN
HISTORY MUSEUM

The next day we arrived at the Charles Wright African
American History Museum as our next tour around
noon. The museum was starting to get good traffic,
families entering with children running around the
large lobby that took in the daylight so beautifully. After
waiting a bit, we were greeted by Mama Kuba, a wise,
elderly black woman about four feet tall. Then we began
the tour of the museum.

We started with the origin of the human race, from a
common ancestor; the human race began as Africans,
and as people left Africa, the human form diverged into
Mama Kuba showed us the diverse and advanced African civilizations, two of which were my favorites, the Egyptians and Nubians. The most advanced African civilizations were far ahead of any European civilization at the time and provided some of the basic information and knowledge our modern world and its accomplishments have been based on.

Next, we walked into an exhibit letting us experience the slave trade. We were even on a replica deck of a slave ship. That was well enough, with realistic backgrounds and sound effects simulating distant yelling and the swells of the ocean, but then we went into the belly of the beast—the cargo hull filled with Africans being taken into slavery—and it was a different world.

It was dim, and hundreds of black mannequins with realistic features lay shoulder to shoulder. It wouldn’t have gotten to me if it weren’t for the sounds. From speakers around the exhibit, there was an endless loop of groaning, coughing and cries for help in foreign languages. Mama Kuba instructed us to stand in silence to absorb the painful atmosphere. It was one of the most intense experiences in my life. As I looked around at my classmates, I saw tears streaming down one student’s face at the sights and sounds he was experiencing with us.

I asked Jamal Deakings, a sophomore electronic media production major, why he shed those tears. “Seeing all my ancestors like that, I saw my family’s faces when I saw that, and it just made me emotional to see that pain and struggle they had to go through,” he said. “It’s just like watching your uncle or your sister or brother just lying dead in a boat, and that really struck a chord with me.”

The rest of the exhibit followed a familiar path—slave trading, slave work, abolitionism, emancipation, segregation, civil rights—and we then came to the end. It was all such a powerful experience, but I knew if I stayed any longer, I would never leave. I especially loved Mama Kuba, an elder I respected so much. She had the presence of a proud lioness; any direction she faced, we all parted without hesitation, never turning our backs to her.

THE MOTOWN MUSEUM

After the History Museum, we went to a church to have a nice dinner with traditional soul food, collard greens, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, biscuits and the like. It was nice to have an uplifting experience after being faced with the atrocities of what my race had gone through. Afterward, we packed our things and went to our last destination to end the trip on a lighter note, the Motown Museum, the former headquarters for one of the most successful recording companies of the 20th century for black musicians. It helped start the careers of such musicians as the Temptations, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson & the Jackson Five. I was glad to end it here to see the great victories black culture achieved in the 60’s in making a kind of music that didn’t just produce successful music careers, but helped fuel the revolution against racial prejudice in America.

RETURNING HOME

Once everything was said and done, our things were packed and our minds full, we climbed on the bus back home, our bonds now as strong as any family’s.

We had been taught these things in our class, we watched insightful documentaries, guest speakers and professors had given us lectures and shown pictures and examples of racism in everyday life, but this trip is where we were hit harder than any learning material could. We grew as a class and as people in that time, and from then on we had in-depth discussions so long and drawn out that we didn’t have enough time in the class to talk about it all. I now have more pride in my African heritage and even want to find out more about myself. I found out that my family had traced our history to the African nation of Nigeria. It is nice to have that closure; it may not be much and I don’t know what tribe I came from, but now I have a nation, a flag and a part of Africa to look to from now on. I feel even prouder of my people because I now have a place of origin, a true home in Africa.

Although that is as far as I can go in my personal heritage, I will always have a better understanding and a great love for my motherland, everyone’s motherland: Africa, and one day I would like to visit her. I’m sure she misses her children dearly every day.