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Are you interested in journalism? Want to write about topics pertaining to the Black community? Check out UVa’s newest publication -- Orpheé Noir. We are dedicated to informing, voicing, and celebrating the Black community. If you are interested in joining, then please fill out this form.

For examples of our work, click here.

Sincerely,
Alexander Adames
Student-Editor-in-Chief
In Defense of Slacktivism

SLACKTIVISM:
- "political activities that have no impact on real-life political outcomes, but only serve to increase the feel-good factor of the participants"

by Alexander Adames
Student-Editor-in-Chief

Have you ever wanted to get involved in activism but have never had the time or opportunity to do so? Well, good news: You can always be an internet slacktivist! Often used as a pejorative, slacktivist is a portmanteau of the words “slacker” and “activist.” As Dictionary.com defines it, slacktivism refers to “actions taken to bring about political or social change but requiring only minimal commitment, effort, or risk.” These actions can include sharing a video, changing your profile picture, and sharing an article that expresses support for a particular cause or course of action. Despite the critiques it garners, slacktivism is indeed useful and has proven to be highly successful on a number of occasions.

Slacktivism’s critics express that the tactics of slacktivists are ineffective because they are not on the ground rallying, protesting, or engaging the public and politicians in person. Activism is typically a means to an end. By raising awareness about an issue, activists hope to pressure decision-makers into amending an issue. Since it occurs online, slacktivism has the potential to reach much wider audiences than in-person activism, resulting in social media trends that produce national media headlines.

For example, the 2014 Ice Bucket Challenge was a form of slacktivism that attempted to promote awareness about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig’s Disease) and encourage donations for research funding. The challenge presented audiences with an opportunity to engage in something perceivably fun and post it on social media, where they could garner “likes” and claim to be raising awareness of the issue. Whether motivated by their own hedonism or their genuine desire to raise awareness, people who participated in this challenge did indeed raise awareness about ALS. The challenge produced headlines, attracting the attention of celebrities and politicians. Within a year of the campaign, ALS research received over $220 million in funding. In fact, Johns Hopkins University scientists have already credited the challenge for some
breakthroughs in ALS research, demonstrating the powerful impact and results that slacktivism can bring about.

Contrary to what some may say, the slacktivist is not necessarily someone who is lazy. Rather, the slacktivist may be someone who is indeed deeply passionate about an issue but lacks the time and/or money to engage it through in-person activism. As Cindy Leonard of the Bayer Center for Non-profit Management explains, someone engaged in slacktivism may have a job and other personal responsibilities, which keep them from attending protests, rallies, or flyering for an issue. With that in mind, “slacker activism” is much better than no activism at all. In fact, in the case of raising awareness, slacktivism may be more effective than some forms of in-person activism, especially handing out fliers. By handing out fliers, a person is only reaching those who receive the fliers, which is likely limited to the number of fliers a person hands out. On the other hand, a person who continually makes social media posts about a particular issue has the capacity to draw the attention of hundreds (and, sometimes, thousands) of Facebook friends, educating many more people than someone doing in-person flyering.

The truth is slacktivists are citizens who are essential to modern-day social movements. Compared to non-slacktivists, slacktivists are twice as likely to volunteer, encourage people to sign a petition or contact a politician, and ask for donations. From #BlackLivesMatter to #IceBucketChallenge to #IfTheyGunnedMeDown, slacktivism is responsible for transforming hashtags to social movements. Slacktivism has inspired many to organize for social justice.

Though there are certainly valid critiques of slacktivism, dismissing slacktivism as utterly useless or ineffective ignores the reality of change that it has fostered and its potential for inspiring wide-reaching, collective action. While they may not be as engaged as traditional activists, as a collective, slacktivists do serve an important role. Their collective actions are able to gather support from the general public and bring national attention to certain issues much more easily. While I encourage you to be as involved as possible, you should never feel ashamed about engaging in slacktivism. Share those videos, articles, and petitions. The core activists who are on the ground protesting and talking to policymakers need your support. With slacktivism, we have the opportunity to bring about change at a quicker rate than previous generations.

Black Solidarity Conference Attendees
February 11-14, 2016
UVa students join in Black Solidarity with other students from across the nation

By Brianna Hamblin
News Editor

This February, University of Virginia students and OAAA Deans traveled to Yale University to participate in the 21st Annual Black Solidarity Conference. The conference was an opportunity for Black students from top universities to come together and discuss issues that pertain to the Black community in our society. This year, the conference was titled The Mis-education: Changing History as We Know It. The weekend was filled with workshops led by outstanding leaders from across the nation such as professors, students, doctors, writers, artists, and entrepreneurs.

Students also engaged in group discussions to go over and think deeper about what they learned at the different workshops they attended. These groups, known as “Ujima” groups, was an opportunity for the students to do exactly what ujima means: “to build and maintain our community together and to make our brother’s and sister’s problems, our problems and to solve them together.” First year College student, Barry White, saw this as a valuable aspect of the conference.

“The trip was great and it showed me how all over the country Black students are facing the same issues and it’s good that we have chances to come together and discuss ways to improve our circumstances and try to be successful,” White said.

Fourth year Commerce student, Miles Jackson, also agreed that the conference’s effort to bring students together was an important experience, especially for Black students who face the same issues we see regularly at institutions such as the University of Virginia.

Jackson said, “I feel that the conference was particularly beneficial in its aim to bring together Black students from predominantly white institutions. Certain aspects of these students' college experiences are uniquely different from the college experience at a historically Black college or university.”

The conference also included a concert featuring up and coming Southside Chicago artist, Mick Jenkins. Jenkins had the crowd energetic and dancing up until the club closed. There was also an open mic event that included spoken word, rapping, and stand-up comedy that resonated powerfully with everyone in the theater. Third
year Commerce student, Sydney Shavers, enjoyed the open mic event the best.

“One of my favorite parts of the conference was attending the open mic night. I didn’t have much of an expectation, but it was amazing!” Said Shavers. “The poems and stories spoke to my soul...The methods of storytelling were almost as diverse as the students' experiences.”

The weekend ended Saturday night with a formal dinner and a keynote speaker, Professor Elizabeth Alexander. As well as a professor, Ms. Alexander is an author of poems, essays, plays, and other collective works. At the conference she delivered a powerful speech about the importance of coming together as a community and uniting in solidarity regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or nationality.

Overall, the conference was a powerful weekend that everyone was glad to experience. Reflecting back, Shavers said she would definitely want to go again.

“It was a great experience traveling with a bunch of my classmates and deans, meeting Black students from colleges around the country, attending workshops led by notable, contemporary, Black activists,
there is a loneliness in this world so great
a chill so heavy, sticky running down the cleft of my lips
to seal them shut
to seal me shut
there is a loneliness
there is a loneliness in this world so great that I have felt it in the dead breath of a boy that will never grow past four shots of vodka and a car going two miles over the limit
so great that each scale of skin is seeped with saline, my own and my mother's, my sister's, my lover's and
they are made
of me
they are me and i ate of their pain as wave to shore
there is a loneliness in this world with the grandeur of silken linings in coffins, of unopened letter on eggshell whites, of unwiped tears through nine layers of mask,
of friends saying goodbye before ever saying “i am sorry”
there is a loneliness in this world so great
that atlas himself cannot shrug under the weight
cannot bear to ignore the cracking of bone against bone against bone
there is a loneliness so great
so great
that i myself cannot bear the weight
that i
myself am weary, am weeping, wilting
that I am infinite.
that I am alone.
The Importance of Black Conferences

by Myliyah Hanna
Lifestyle Co-Editor

While attending a PWI, or a primarily white institution, many black students are faced with the feeling of loneliness, of difference, and perhaps even a sense of not belonging. For those in such a position, it can be important to venture away from the campus to a place that is familiar or a place where one feels acceptance. Undoubtedly, there is a certain comfort that comes with being around people who, while completely individualistic, can relate to certain shared experiences or hardships. Beyond the HBCU, a great place to find this collectivity is at an African American conference. In a time where majority of black students are faced with the horrors of police brutality, microaggressions, and a blatant lack of care for black and brown bodies, solidarity conferences are a great environment to not only express these frustrations to a crowd that understands, but to learn and grow in a space truly safe for blackness to thrive. It is a coming together, a collection of the unique, the strong, and the tenacious to gather from all over the country. As a black student, it can become frustrating to not have the resources or even the willing audiences to hear their concerns and their worries.

Having returned from the 21st Annual Black Solidarity Conference at Yale, I have found comfort in being able to express the everyday frustrations I feel or experience, from small microaggressions to the comments of unaware students. In a place I have never been before, I felt the most at home amongst peers that, beyond looking like me, truly understood me. In that environment, it was easier for all of us to relax and to say the things that we could never truly say without some sort of opposition from our white counterparts.

Perhaps one of the most inspiring aspects of attending a conference for African Americans is the success of black intellectuals, businessmen and businesswomen, writers, musicians, and more. Amongst the many workshops, panels, and talks with a large range of successful black individuals, it provides black students the evidence of black success and
how far it can carry us in a society that says we are incapable of escaping the boundaries set around us. These conferences are evidence of what can be done when we push through the obstacles that stand before us, and what we can do to continue to empower African Americans across the nation to continue to pursue their goals, their passions.

Ultimately, and if one has the chance, attend a black solidarity conference. Go to that place of black love, empowerment, and acceptance. Go to that place where you will be accepted for all of your originality and your personality. At these conferences, know that you do not have to worry about not belonging. All are welcome, and all are appreciated. More than anything, those conferences want to remind you of the incredible value of your being and, despite the hardships we currently face, there will always be a place to call home.

COME AND JOIN US FOR A DIVERSITY WORKSHOP!

Appreciating Differences™ is a fast-paced session to explore our own attitudes toward differences in a safe, respectful atmosphere.

February 27, 2016 @ 8:30 am in Newcomb Commonwealth Room.

RSVP: http://www.questionpro.com/t/AKaaNzTs3G

Terri Moore

Senior Facilitator

Terri Moore is a Senior Consultant and Facilitator for Korn/Ferry Leadership and Talent Consulting, based in the Atlanta, GA office.

Ms. Moore has strong diversity and inclusion expertise and facilitation presence. Ms. Moore’s efforts throughout corporate, non-profit and higher education communities focus on educating, advocating and empowering multi-ethnic and multi-dimensional diversity & inclusion platforms to elevate individuals, groups and organizations. Throughout leadership development, she has been responsible for formulating and driving execution of organizational workforce, workplace and marketplace diversity and inclusion strategies and cultural competence education, along with developing mentoring programs and change management strategies.

Prior to joining Korn/Ferry, Ms. Moore spent nine years focused on diversity & inclusion and leadership development with Time Warner Cable. She also worked in career development at the University of Virginia and Gettysburg College. From a community perspective, Ms. Moore serves as a coach and facilitator for two of CBI’s leadership development programs.

Ms. Moore most recently served on boards for the Community Building Initiative (CBI) and the Diversity Forum in Charlotte. She served on the Women In Cable and Telecommunications and National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) national boards. In 2011, she was named one of 15 Catalysts for Diversity in Charlotte from Uptown Magazine.

Ms. Moore received an undergraduate degree from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in Speech Communications and a Master’s degree from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Higher Education Administration; she will complete a Master’s degree in Organization Development from Queens University, Charlotte in May 2015.
For decades, we, as black people, have fought for equal rights and our chance to have a strong privilege in this society. In the media, we encounter many things that add to the stereotypes of young blacks and the reputation we have willingly garnered. Erasing these stereotypes and acknowledging each black student for who they are is ideal but may not be completely possible in the diverse and judgmental society. Now, in today’s society, more than ever, it is important to strive for what we want and declare our success from the beginning. By declaring our success, we immediately put ourselves in a positive mental zone that furthers our motivation to keep going strong and achieve the dreams that we have looked forward to for so long.

Of course, it is important to be “colorblind” and not to judge others based on the color of their skin. We should, however, be proud and acknowledge our skin. Being a young black student in America is a powerful privilege. We have a greater chance than most to eliminate these strong stereotypes and become something bigger than others may expect. I think this privilege is overlooked sometimes because we focus on the negative views that society associates with us. In the future, however, we should look forward to these opportunities and look at the positive effects and importance of being able to show our true selves and how we can make a big difference just like anyone else. It is our job to eliminate these stereotypes and embrace being young, gifted, and black in America.
Fisher v. University of Texas II

by Brandon Brooks
Opinion Editor

Last December, the United States Supreme Court began hearing arguments in the case of Fisher v. University of Texas II (Fisher II). The plaintiff, Abigail Fisher, sued the University of Texas at Austin, arguing that the university had violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause, which prohibits states denying “any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” This case is a continuation of an earlier case argued before the Supreme Court, which the Court remanded to a federal appellate court. The Appellate Court reaffirmed a lower court’s decision holding that the University of Texas’ use of race as a consideration in the admissions process was sufficiently narrowly tailored to the legitimate interest of promoting educational diversity and therefore satisfied strict scrutiny. Should they rule in Fisher’s favor, experts fear the Supreme Court may end affirmative action in colleges and universities nationwide.

According to The University of Texas, race played little factor in the decision to reject Fisher. Although the University of Texas admitted that one African-American and four Latino applicants with lower combined academic and personal achievement scores than Fisher’s were admitted, so were forty-two white applicants with scores identical to or lower than hers. In fact, 168 black and Latino students with academic and personal achievement profiles that were greater than or equal to Fisher’s scores were also denied. Clearly, Fisher’s racial identity was not a deciding factor in the university’s admissions process.

Affirmative action has a long controversial history since its introduction in the 1960s. Critics allege that affirmative action programs have failed, claiming that they have “create a toxic campus environment,” “engage in racial discrimination,” and lack public support. Perhaps the most infamous dissent against affirmative action came from Justice Antonin Scalia, to which much public outcry was directed following a statement in which he claimed that “there are those who contend that it does not benefit African-Americans to get them into the University of Texas where they do not do well, as opposed to having them go to a less-advanced school, a slower-track school where they do well.” Scalia went on to claim that he was “not impressed” that the University of Texas would admit fewer African Americans, and appeared to suggest that admitting more African American students would reduce the proportion of competent black students admitted to the university.

Scalia’s comments are without a doubt offensive and unbecoming of an individual of
his stature. Such statements appear reminiscent of attempts to justify separate but equal institutions, which openly doubted the ability of African-Americans to compete against their white counterparts in academic settings. Furthermore, one must acknowledge the irony that Scalia would express concern regarding the academic prowess of African-American students in defense of Fisher, whose own academic credentials are questionable themselves.

Furthermore, as Justice Ruth Ginsburg acknowledges in her dissenting opinion in *Fisher I*, race is merely one in a series of holistic factors used to determine student admission. Universities should strive to be diverse institutions, which benefits the overall academic experience by bringing in students of different perspectives and experiences. As far as Fisher is concerned, it is unfortunate the admissions committee did not grant her admission; however, portraying herself as a victim of racial prejudice is impertinent and immature. This is an insult to those who have actually suffered racial discrimination, and places at risk the future of minority students aspiring to go to college. If anything, African-American students have greater to take issue at the Court’s decision; African-Americans make up approximately 12% of the population of Texas yet comprised a mere 4% of the student body. Indeed, this type of discrepancy can be seen as the exact reason affirmative action exists.
The Imagined Savior is that Which we Seek (Part I)

by Araba Dennis
Staff Writer

Professor Claudrena Harold’s class, “From Motown to Hip-Hop: The Evolution of African-American Music” came to a close on December 8. Her last lecture summarized the development of hip-hop from the late 90s to the present, lamenting losses of greats like Whitney Houston and praising new faces of the scene like Frank Ocean. While listening to Ocean’s “Pink Matter” was a quaint way to end our last 75-minute period together, Professor Harold, as is her modus operandi, went deeper. She asked us of our cultural capital (or lack thereof), our desperate need for a Bessie Smith, a Miles Davis. She questioned why we engage in such incessant tittering on social media over unsurprising nominations from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences: we have our unsurprising Taylor Swift, our unsurprising Ed Sheeran, and yes, our unsurprising Kendrick Lamar.

Now, as part of an earlier lecture on Tupac, it was only logical that we examine the near obsession Kendrick Lamar has shown for East Coast’s most beloved and fatalistic rapper, and make comparisons as to their lyrical prowess. Professor Harold went as far as to say that Lamar is the most talented rapper of our time, and his prospective accolades shown in the Grammy nominations support that statement. Lamar’s chaotic contender for new black national anthem, “Alright”, pulled nominations for Song of the Year, Best Rap Video, Best Rap Song, and Best Rap Performance. The album on which the well-performing song takes place, To Pimp a Butterfly, is up for both Best Rap Album and Album of the Year. Trophies upon trophies, a stint with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, and one would think that there was no question as to who we should revere as the voice of our generation.

Yet, much to the delight of millennial critics, I have to acknowledge that there is undoubtedly something missing. True, To Pimp a Butterfly is an unmatched, raucous celebration of blackness and critique of the ever-present status quo, but it is far from Kendrick Lamar’s best album, let alone a summation of who we are as heirs of this world. Hip-hop on the whole seems to have lost its way in its ability to satisfy our hunger for songs of the revolution; rather, we are stuffed with the fodder of misogyny and money-grubbing, droning beats and incomprehensive bars. That which we choose is that which demoralizes.
But all is not lost. Champions exist in spaces that, on our part, are voluntarily unfamiliar.

Enter Ambrose Akinmusire, the epitome of the strides that the genre of jazz has made in its ease in making commentary on the state of American society, particularly within the black community. Akinmusire’s 2014 album, The Imagined Savior is Far Easier to Paint, is chock full of songs that resonate with the injustices that have simply become a part of the African-American identity in the 21st century. Furthermore, it represents an unfamiliar hope and resilience that other genres -- hip-hop -- and other artists -- Lamar -- struggle to accomplish. I can easily dub the trumpeter a vanguard among the likes of James Brown and John Coltrane who brought listeners to tears with a simple scale.

The tenth track on The Imagined Savior, “Rollcall for Those Absent”, is a harsh eulogy, a startling revolt against the epidemic of police brutality that has rampaged through the US. A drone of funeral dirge-esque chords produced by an organ play on accompanied by a freestyle drum-set, while a four-year old reads an almost interminable list of unarmed black men who have been killed by the police in recent years. As the reader echoes the names, “Trayvon Martin” heard over ten times, one cannot help but sob as the speaking turns into an unrelenting timbre, beating against the ears with the pleas that such a madness must stop, should never have begun in the first place. Is this not what we need? Is this restlessness not our truth?

I’d like to think so.

I will miss Professor Harold’s class. I will miss listening to Biggie’s flow in “Juicy” and appreciating the business-minded intellect that drove Berry Gordy Jr. to create Hitsville, USA, where Michael Jackson sat in the same studio as Stevie Wonder and learned what it meant to have soul. Above all, though, I will miss the continual growth, the gain of the aforementioned cultural capital that allows me to value both DMX and Christian Scott, to value the production of Rick Rubin with Run-DMC’s King of Rock (1985) and a self-produced, no feature album by J. Cole. I will miss Kendrick Lamar, him acting in the persona of a 14-year old boy clowning in a car with his friends, celebrating blackness and eternity. I will miss hearing about Cyntonia Brown, the “ceaseless, inexhaustible child” that Ambrose Akinmusire mourns with steady breath, both grieving and extolling all that we have become.
“Sistahs” Getting Fit
Sponsors: Black College Women & Office of African American Affairs
Black College Women is starting a new intervention that aims to jump start the path to physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle for black women across grounds. During Black History Month, we challenge black women across grounds to drink a gallon of water a day and do an activity for 30 minutes that elevates your heart rate at least 3 times per week (i.e. exercise) or take at least 5,000 steps per day. Women who participate in this challenge will be entered into a raffle for one of two prizes. More details will be made available on the Luther P. Jackson Black Cultural Center Facebook Page. Contact Saron Fantahun, LPI Graduate Assistant, sfhcc@virginia.edu for more information about enrollment.

Necessity Bags for the Homeless Service Project
Sponsors: NAACP, Sister Love, and United Sisters
In an effort to address some of the issues that come with homelessness, NAACP, Sisterly Love, and United Sisters have come together to collect items that people without a place to live this Winter will find useful.
Black History Month 2016

For information on the Office of African-American Affairs, please visit our website at: www.virginia.edu/OAAA

February 1, 2016 6:30pm Black History Month Kick-Off Celebration
Location: OHJI Forum
Our History Does Not Begin With Slavery
This event will showcase Black students from across the University using various forms of artistic expression (music, spoken word, history, dance, etc.) to capture our theme for the month: "Our History Does Not Begin With Slavery".
Light refreshments served.
Sponsors: NAACP at UVA

February 3, 2016 12:20 - 1:30pm COMMUNITY Dialogues: Race Relations and Free Speech on College Campuses
Location: Rouss & Robertson Halls, Room 305
Join us for a roundtable discussion about race relations and free speech on college campuses. Students and faculty are invited to attend. Lunch will be provided.
Sponsored by Black Commerce Student Network (BCSN)

February 3, 2016 7:00 pm Young, Gifted, & Black: A Community Dinner and Discussion
Location: Newcomb Hall Ballroom
This dinner will offer the opportunity for our students, faculty, and staff to come together and unite around the shared experiences of being Black at UVA.
Sponsors: UVA Parents Fund & Office of African-American Affairs

February 16, 2016 6:00 pm Black History Month OAAA Keynote Address: Mychal Denzel Smith
Location: Newcomb Hall Ballroom
Sponsors: Carter G. Woodson Institute, Office of Diversity and Equity & Office of African-American Affairs

As a freelance writer, social commentator, and mental health advocate, [Smith’s] work has appeared in online outlets such as the Atlantic, the Guardian, Huffington Post, and the Root. His writing covers a range of topics, including race, politics, social justice, and pop culture. He is the author of the forthcoming book, Invisible Man: Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man’s Education, in which he chronicles his coming of age today, in light of current events and recent activities across Grounds, we think his visit will be especially relevant to University students.

February 27, 2016 12 noon SERVICE PROJECT: Reaching Out to the Homeless
NAACP, Sisterly Love, and United Sisters will be collecting toiletries, snacks, hats, scarves, gloves, and socks until Fri Feb 26th (drop-box located in OAAA)
Join us as we serve the homeless in our community. Contact Person: jvn2jn@virginia.edu
Sponsors: NAACP, Sisterly Love & United Sisters

February 27, 2016 2:00 - 5:00pm Black History Month Art Expo and Oratorical Competition
Location: Runk, Green Room
As we approach Black History Month, the Lambda Zeta chapter of The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. will be hosting the first ever Black History Art Expo in conjunction with the Black Student Alliance Oratorical Competition.
Sponsors: Lambda Zeta chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. & Black Student Alliance

February 27, 2016 6:00 - 12:00 pm Diversity Deep-Dive: Leading at the Intersections
Location: Newcomb Hall, Common Wealth Room
Appreciating Differences™ is a fast-paced session to explore our own attitudes toward differences in a safe, respectful atmosphere. Participants will explore how diversity is far broader than age, race and gender – how factors like academic year, role on campus, communication style, and other differences also play a part. We'll learn how all kinds of differences can “make a difference” in our relationships. And, we’ll link this understanding to strategies each of us can learn to help actively promote an inclusive environment.
Sponsors: Black Leadership Institute, UVA Parents Fund, Altria & Office of African-American Affairs

February 28, 2016 6:00 pm Harambee II Celebration: Young, Gifted & Black
Location: Newcomb Hall Ballroom
The Office of African-American Affairs’ Peer Advisor Program will host its annual “Harambee II” Celebration. This program is designed to celebrate the academic achievement of the entering class.
Sponsors: OAAA Peer Advisor Program, Office of African-American Affairs

February 29, 2016 6:00 pm Where Love is Illegal: Can America Include?
Sponsors: Project RISE, LGBTQ+ Center, and Office of African American Affairs
Location: Newcomb Hall Ballroom
Despite gains made in many parts of the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people are, in some regions, increasingly persecuted and denied basic human rights. This event is meant to consider the gains we have made in our country and to consider the difficulties we experience still in our pursuit of love. Dinner will be provided.

Presented by the Office of African-American Affairs, University of Virginia
Black Success at White Universities

by Myliyah Hanna
Lifestyle Co-Editor

I’m an intercity high school graduate. I remember in my senior year, amidst the intensive A.P. Government in-class tests my friends and I were all preparing for, we were all starting to figure out our place in the world of college, a world that was often deemed unattainable for minorities like us. I remember that my high school guidance counselor would go from class to class, giving us the typical college schpiel about SATs and the Common App, emphasizing that we should have at least one or two community colleges on our lists. She wasn’t wrong - for some of us that graduated two years ago, community college was the best decision they made.

That reality is something I often find myself thinking about while I traverse through Grounds.

When I arrived on Grounds and began my college years, I had gone from train tracks and corner stores, gum-covered sidewalks, to lecture halls filled with Apple laptops, Lilly Pulitzer planners, Michael Kors boots and bags. I was thrust into an environment where I no longer had to walk into a classroom and see a diverse sea of faces, but rather search for the students that could understand what I was, and still am, feeling: I am a very black spot in a very white place.

I did not go into college unaware of the circumstances. I knew that if I went to any big-name university, or even if I went to a smaller university out of state, I could not hide from the fact that I would be one of a handful. According to Forbes 2015 ranking of the University of Virginia, African Americans make up 6.18% of the student body, or a little less than a thousand students out of an undergraduate population of 16,087. Even without the numbers, I felt that. I felt that every day as I walked from my dorm to my classes, as I waited in line for dumplings, and as I filed into my classroom for another lecture. I felt this invisible weight in the melanin that colors my skin, that sometimes makes me feel self-conscious in a room full of white faces. It is a sense of
doubt, a nagging voice in the back of my head that says you do not belong.

Since I have been here, the one thing that has helped me be successful in all of the endeavors I take on is acknowledging that I do belong. My insatiable desire for knowledge and for betterment are the two sole reasons for why I am at this university, and why no amount of stares or microaggressions will turn me away. Certainly, some days are easier than others, and the idea of returning back to a world that made sense to me sounded very easy when the days were harder. My mother, however, has raised me to stand strong in the face of adversity and to constantly remind myself that nothing is accidental. Academically, college was not going to be easy. Socially, it was not going to be easy. No matter what school I would go to, my blackness would always be with me.

Taking African American studies classes, as well as other racial studies classes, has also helped me navigate my identity here on Grounds. In those classes I have learned the complexities of blackness, its representations, its place in white society. Everything that I have learned and am continuing to understand has made me stronger. I am more confident in my abilities to speak about issues that are important to me. I am no longer afraid to share my opinions or thoughts in the classroom, no matter the subject. Everyday I am learning something new about my blackness, something new to discover and to explore. To this day, I do not believe that I would be the young woman I am today, that I would not have this confidence in myself, if I was not here. I do not believe I would have learned about the magnificence of my blackness and where it fits in a classroom of mostly white students if I did not enroll here. My blackness has set me apart, and I truly would not want to be anyone else than who I am right now.

Outstanding First-Year:
Kiara Rogers

Outstanding Mentor:
Jenne Nurse and Jacob Uskavitch

College Career:
Carmel Berhanu

Silent Inspirations:
Sydney Pettiford

Student Humanitarian:
Stafford G. Brown, III

Outstanding Leader:
Aryn Frazier

Culture programming:
Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi

Shining Student Athlete:
Sadiq Olanrewaju
In Swahili, Harambee means, “let’s pull together” and it is in this sense that we come together each Spring to hoist our students upon our shoulders to celebrate their academic achievement.

This year, Paul and Taylor Harris encourage our students to consider three important points: 1) always remember that teammates matter, 2) to misbehave with integrity, and 3) to, at all times, keep their gaze focused upon their goals.

**HIGH HONORS**
(3.4 or better)

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<th>Razan Adam</th>
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<th>Kaylin Peete</th>
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<td>Mahir Ahmed</td>
<td>Alexis Gravely</td>
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<td>Diogo Miguel</td>
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Harambee II 2016

HONORS
(3.0 to 3.399)

Elma Adusei
Victoria Afor
Leandro Alberto Dominguez
Peter Andrews
Meron Asgedom
Michael Atalla
Jade Baker
William Bennet
Victor Boardman
Alexis Bowks
Kristen Boyce
Eric Brown
Brooke Burnette
William Burris
Hannah Cassady
Joy Collins
Aliyah Cotton
Ian Dabney
Jared Downing
Brianna Eaddy
Cayla Eason
Helen Edwards
Taylor Ehrlich
Calvin Epps
Annia Fountain
Gabriella Fuller
Rahiel Gebre
Wayland Goode
Shadelle Gregory
Chloe Grinage
Nana-Bilkisu Habib
Alexus Harris
Alana Herran
Phyllicia Holt
Danyelle Honore'
Morgan Hunt
Nathan John
Kiera Jones
Olivia Jones
Cameron Jones
Taylor Jones
Jasmine Jones
Marrissa Jones
Jordan Kijewski
Sabrina Lamhaouar
Deanna Lewis
Lauren Lord
Kiley Lovelace
Lauryn Major
Brianna McGraw
Gabrielle McLymont
Ahmed M. Khalil
Selena Moore
George Morris
Christiane Musah-gasha
Ronald Proctor
Leonard Ramsey
Jillian Randolph
Nyasia Rhine
Stephen Ross
Corey Sostre
Gabrielle Stanfield
Andress Stanley
Gloria Stout
Agyakwa Tenkorang
Lucas Therrien
Azari Thomas
Sarah Tmimi
Rambert Tyree
Melvin Walker
Destini Walker
Mikayla Warren
Darien Waters
Alexandra Weisfeld
Stephen White
Ozias Williams
Nia Williams
Demetri Workman
Alice Zormelo
Lazare Zoungrana

CONGRATULATIONS!
An end to quiet protest:
Kendrick Lamar equates black art with revolution at the Grammy’s (Part II)

By: Araba Dennis
Staff Writer

Scene: An audience, draped in designer garb and anticipation, waits expectantly for this year’s token hip-hop or rap artist to perform happily and end the night with no awards. Rapper Kendrick Lamar walks onto a stage, leading a line of, assumingly, disproportionately incarcerated black men. A lone saxophonist, playing the weariness of the jazz impulse, tall steel bars restricting more men, symbols, everywhere, of blackness. Lamar gingerly takes a mic in hands restricted by chains, leans in, goes off.

At the 58th Annual Grammy Awards, when Lamar delivered excerpts from “The Blacker the Berry” -- “I want you to know that I’m a proud monkey,” -- he spat the lyrics, sure, gravelly, declaratory. These are no cute lyrics hidden behind choreographed sparkle or vague allusions followed by semi-provocative Super Bowl performances that serve only to promote world tours. No, these words, this imagery for that particular audience on that particular night was a revolution.

Kendrick Lamar took this night, a night during which, in 58 years, exactly one hip-hop artist has won song and album of the year, and reclaimed the title. The rapper had no qualms with challenging the long established Eurocentric standards of beauty that tell people of color that their “wide noses” and “happy hair” are nothing to be proud of. Further still, he came to the Grammy’s, a show which has shown constant preference to white artists and pop music, to destroy that standard.

With the stage decorated with women in costume resembling African tribes and a large bonfire reflecting his intensity, the rapper moved into his song “Alright”, a piece that has been called by multiple publications the “new black national anthem”. Almost impossibly increasing in passion, Lamar continued on with a freestyle rap during which he mourns the death of Trayvon Martin: “On February 26th/I lost my life too...2012 set us back another 400 years”. Lamar does not hide rage against the oppressive machine -- he stands unafraid, ready to fight any and all who would dare say that such audacity could ever be unwarranted.

The rapper ended his performance with a blackout. A screen lit up behind him, a glaring image of Africa in white with “Compton” covering Niger, Chad, Mali: a former empire. The
audience gives the performer a well-deserved standing ovation, with fellow seasoned rapper Common showing support with a triumphant Black Power fist. Even when the stage was cleared, even when the lights were dimmed, even when another pop artist took home album and song of the year, there was no doubt who won the night. Kendrick Lamar further validated a movement in a way that simple accolades never could. Kendrick Lamar’s performance embodied the spirit of blackness, a trophy that a show like the Grammy’s could never award.

FEBRUARY 29, 2016
6PM – NEWCOMB HALL, COMMONWEALTH ROOM
WHERE LOVE IS ILLEGAL: IS AMERICA INCLUDED?

Despite gains made in many parts of the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people are, in some regions, increasingly persecuted and denied basic human rights. This event is meant to consider the gains we have made in our country and to consider the difficulties we experience still in our pursuit of love.

Dinner will be provided.