

July 2018

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

THE BLACK LIBERATION COLLECTIVE RYERSON

About Us

Black Liberation Collectives are an international movement of students challenging anti-Black racism in post-secondary institutions in every way that it manifests. The BLC in Canada began as a solidarity movement with the students of a Missouri University at the University of Toronto and Ryerson University in 2015. More recently, the Black Liberation Collective at Ryerson re-emerged when students in the School of Social Work said enough is enough and took to task the School, the Faculty of Community Services and Ryerson University. This work also centered solidarity by working closely with Indigenous students who formed a collective called Indigenous Students Rising. Through direct action work and not taking no for an answer, mobilizing students, faculty and staff, the BLC-Ryerson achieved many wins to ensure fundamental changes to Black life on campus. However the work continues, and anti-Black racism still exists at Ryerson, and we are still struggling to survive every day as individual students on this campus and in this City.

Our collective operates from a theoretical lens of anti-Black racism. This means we actively make space for and include all Black people through elevating, supporting and including the most marginalized in our communities. We understand that liberation for the most marginalized means liberation for us all. We have the opportunity to be a part of a movement better that builds upon and betters the knowledge of our predecessors to ensure liberation of Black peoples/students in the multiple ways we live: as Queer, Trans*, gender non-conforming, women, men, Disabled, Mad, newcomer/immigrant, parents, children youth/young people's, former Wards of child welfare (the list continues).



The Pillars of Black Liberation

Collective-Ryerson:

Community:

We want BLC-Ryerson to be a space for Black students to come and build community while also being political. This means finding ways to support each other academically, and finding ways to build community around Blackness. We also hope to collaborate with other groups on campus and across various campuses, specifically with Black and Indigenous Student groups.

Action:

What makes BLC unique is our social justice orientation, specifically through action-based work. The action focuses on planning and doing direct-action work in creative ways, and having to liaison with administration following actions.

Education:

Black students often aren't learning what we want to be learning or are missing out on so much knowledge and skills. BLC-Ryerson provides space and workshops on financial literacy, active listening, languages of love, white supremacy, undoing toxic masculinity, solidarity, self-care and mental wellness.



Our 2017-2018 Goals

BLC-Ryerson's 2017-2018 plan fell under the following three categories:

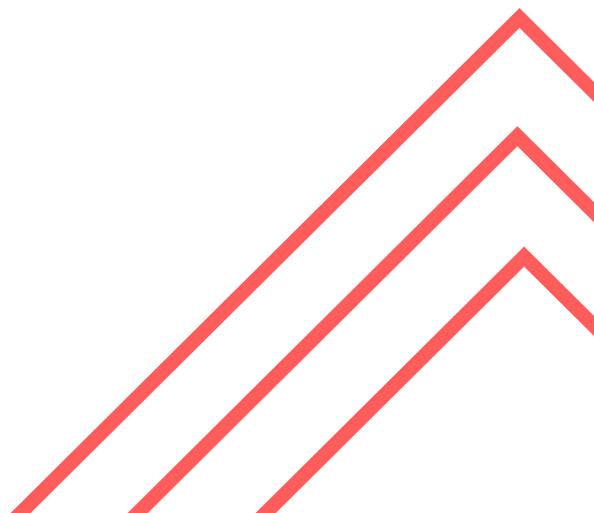
Education/Outreach:

We wanted to reach as many Black students and community members to inform about who BLC-Ryerson is, as well as provided venues and spaces for Black students/community members to meet. These spaces often provided education in some form to Black students, and had prominent Black community members and students from Toronto, all the way to Ottawa, guiding/leading the space. Through our tabling session and events we were able to reach 73 students in total.

Collective/Community Development

BLC-Ryerson in its current iteration was founded by three students who were entering their fourth year in the 2017-2018. Therefore a main priority was to find students who could consistently take on the work/pillars of BLC-Ryerson while also developing sustainable infrastructure. This included the creation of open office hours for Black students to have a space to come and do work/hangout. Finally, an important aspect of community development was to commit to solidarity work with other Black students/student groups throughout the city/province who needed support in some form or way.

This included work with Black Liberation Collective-University of Toronto, Black Students' Association University of Toronto, and with Black Lives Matter-Toronto. We also maintained our commitment to solidarity work with Indigenous students/student groups, including with Indigenous Students Rising at Ryerson.



Our 2016-2017 Goals

Follow Up from 2016-2017

Demands/Action

BLC-Ryerson put forward a list of demands that followed our November 2016 action, which therefore required intentional follow up to ensure these demands were being met in a good way. Below are the following demands that were to be followed up with along with an indication if they've been completed or not:

1. Apology from Henry Parada
2. Take anti-Black and anti-Native racism out of the School of Social Work mission - Explanation: Until the School can genuinely show that they're committed to addressing anti-Black and anti-Native racism, and advancing Black and Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, as well as scholarship this should be removed from the mission as it's false advertising.
3. University-wide systemic review on anti-Black racism
4. Resources for the Black Liberation Collective [Completed]
5. School of Social Work provide an award for Black students
6. Awards for Black students that are not affiliated with the Office of Equity, Community, Inclusion [Completed]
7. President Lachemi, VP Denise O'Neil Green, and Dean Barnoff spend a day in workshop focusing on anti-Black racism.

8. President Lachemi hold a listening session on his own to meet with Black students, staff, and faculty to learn/hear about anti-Black racism on campus

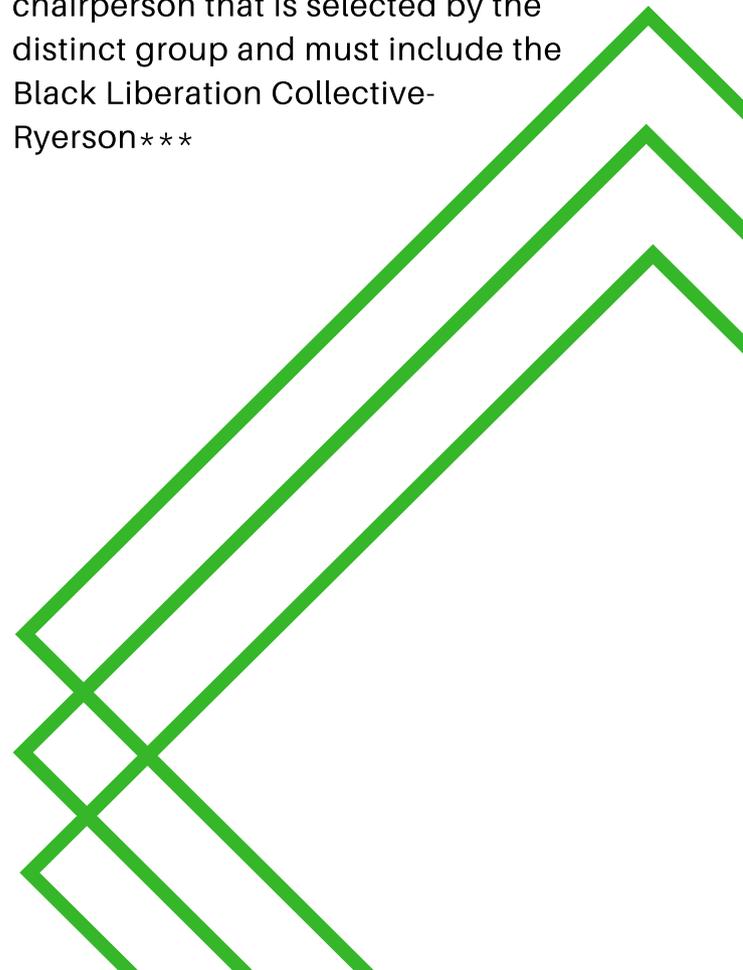
9. Action-plan to be reported back by January 18th, 2018 [Completed]

10. Create a minor in Black Studies and a stream in School of Social Work,

11. Faculty of Community Services, and Faculty of Arts

Faculty of Community Services (Dean Lisa Barnoff) strike up a small ad hoc committee of Black and Indigenous faculty (4-6 people) to support Faculty of Community Services.

Everywhere we've suggested a committee, groups must have a chairperson that is selected by the distinct group and must include the Black Liberation Collective-Ryerson



Specific Focuses/Events

BLC-Ryerson wanted to create spaces where not only could Black students meet each other and hold space together, but engage in political education and have access to different kinds of conversation that relate to being Black in post-secondary education/education in general, as well as just being Black in this City, province, nation, and world. This meant simple events like a Meet & Greet and Movie Night, which were spaces to engage and have conversation about how we're doing and what we need as Black students and what BLC-Ryerson could do to support. We also had a series of events called Black on Campus, which was a four part series which had different conversations about resisting and creating community, developing Black Frosh, and specific input for Black Frosh 2018. Finally, we also hosted an event, in collaboration with Continuing Education Students' Association Ryerson (CESAR), called Love, Justice, and Transformation: Imagining Black Futures for their Love, Sex, and Health Week. This created a space for Black students to engage with discussions about love, sex, community, and relationships with Black community members doing phenomenal work in Toronto and across Turtle Island.

Key Issues

One of the key issues we dealt with this year was the issue of Toronto Police Service Officers present as students at Ryerson, arranged through a deal between the two. The officers, while off duty, are unidentifiable and in Ryerson's classrooms and have access to quite vulnerable conversations/peoples without little information on the parameters for student, staff, and faculty safety. Through our online and on the ground campaigning (further information could be found on our website or Facebook page), we brought attention to the issue and the feedback from all the students we engaged with was that this seemed irresponsible, unsafe, and a display of Ryerson's lack of care/concern for its students, particularly Black and Indigenous and other marginalized students. Our demand was that the partnership between the Toronto Police Services and Ryerson University be terminated, however we were told it was at its for the Winter semester and under evaluation to inform the possible future partnership. To date we've received no information around the partnership continuing.

Budget & Expenditures

Budget: \$10500

Sources:

Office of Equity, Community, and Inclusion
Faculty of Community Services
School of Social Work
Unifor Sam Gindin Chair

Expenditures: \$4091.23

Action-Related: \$215.40
Public Education: \$2455.25
BLC-Ryerson Supplies/Materials: \$1215.99
Miscellaneous: \$204.59

Unused Funds: \$6173