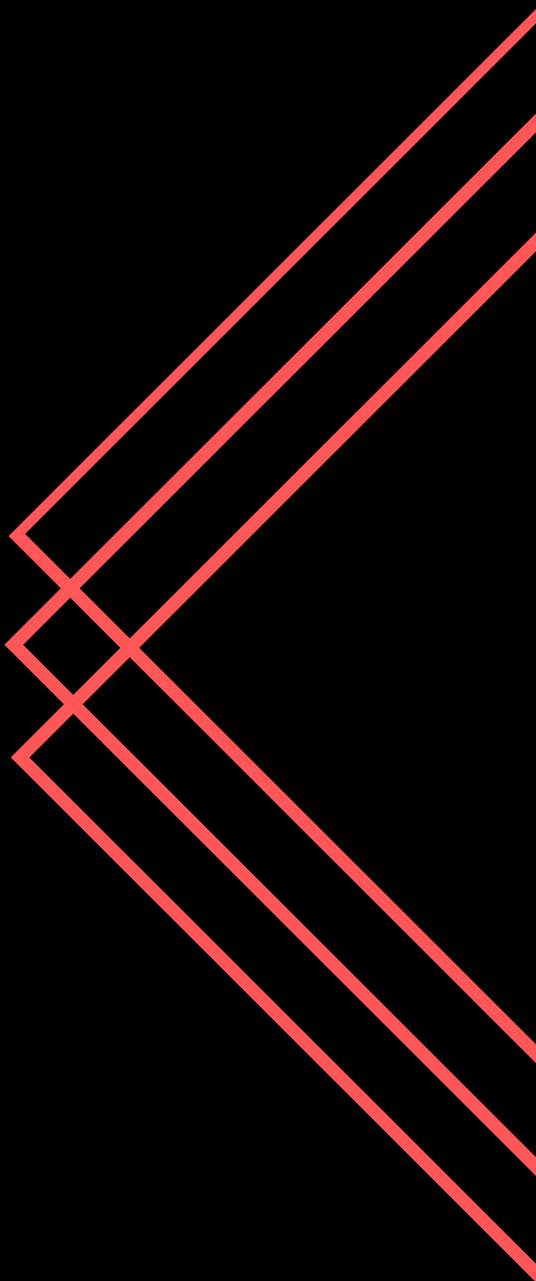
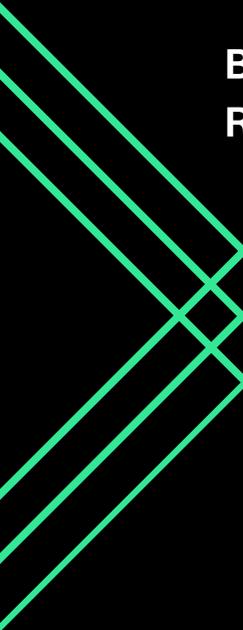




September 2018

# 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

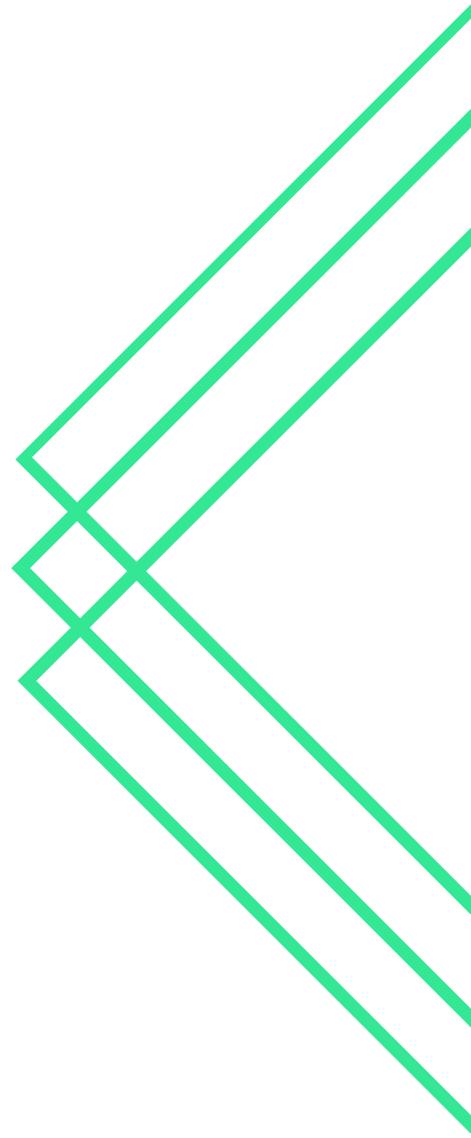
BLACK LIBERATION COLLECTIVE  
RYERSON



# About Us

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.

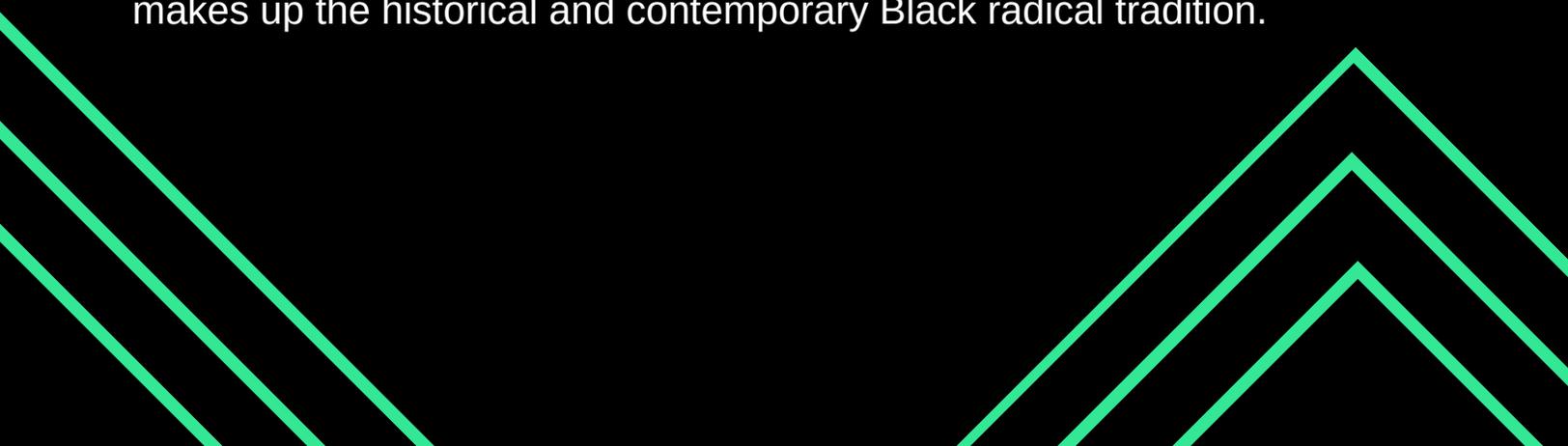
### ***Education:***

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 2018-2019 Goals

BLC-Ryerson's 2018-2019 plan for the year fell under the following three categories:

1. **Education/Outreach** With the inauguration of Black Frosh-Toronto 2018, it was our goal to usher in a year of various spaces/events that spoke to Black life at Ryerson University, this city, province and country. Our events were embedded in the Black radical tradition while speaking to those various aspects of what it means to survive and thrive as a Black person. Between tabling at various events, Black Frosh-2018, Open Mic Night, our Black on Campus Series, and our Black in Your Faculty exhibit, over 250 Black students came out and submitted to our events. Black Frosh-2018 and Black on Campus Series in particular focused on the radical work and writing of Black women whether that was as creatives, activists, organizers, educators, and/or executive directors.
2. **Collective Capacity Development** With the welcoming of new organizers to BLC-Ryerson as well as the sending off to two of our co-founders, a major focus of our collective was the passing along of knowledge. Given that BLC-Ryerson does not have elected seats, and is instead by choice of individuals who are willing to learn and follow a Black radical tradition, this requires learning about the various things that go into being an organizer and what makes up the historical and contemporary Black radical tradition.



# Our 2018-2019 Goals

3. Full Implementation of Demands BLC-Ryerson has long-standing demands dating back to 2016 with the university as well as specific departments. Rather than repeat what the demands were, as they can be found in our 2017-2018 Annual Report as well as our website, we will speak to the main ones of concern this year. This year we spent much of our labour on the new space now called the Black Student Lounge. The creation of this space came directly from our action in October 2016 even though the university is not openly acknowledging this as they inaugurate this space. Not only did we design the space, but we were under the explicit understanding that this was our space as an office given the several meetings we attended regarding the space, as well as our full control of the temporary space located at College Park in the REAL Institute. Another demand that we had to ensure full and ethical follow through was the Anti-Black Racism Climate Review. This also came out of our October 2016 action. main issue was the University administration not making it well known to Black students, staff, alumni, and faculty. We are excited to hear about the results of Dr. Rinaldo Walcott's work on this review, and we hope the university reckons with itself honestly with the findings of that document.



# Key Issues

## *Ryerson University's attempt to implement the Ford government's anti-activist gag order policy*

In August of 2018, the Ford government released a directive stating that post-secondary institutions had to create a facade of a freedom of speech policy that would allow post-secondary institutions to discipline student activists for disrupting violent/oppressive events and spaces. This would heavily impact the work of the most marginalized on campus, such as BLC-Ryerson and Indigenous Students Rising/Indigenous Students' Association, who are also often the ones doing the most radical work. The Ford government threatened withholding funding without the creation of this policy. This directive came with a sub-directive that post-secondary institutions should force their student unions to do the same. By September Ryerson University had already fallen in line, bringing to Senate said policy. In November we, alongside Indigenous Students Rising and a few select accomplices, shut down Senate making known the abhorrence of this policy and Ryerson University's unethical conduct in quickly following it—rather than the university and other post-secondary institutions collectivizing and challenging this directive. One of the main arguments put forward by the policy's author was that they had thought about implementing a policy in this form before the government directive.



# Key Issues

Essentially they pre-thought Doug Ford, and so we should be embarrassed that this is the conduct of an institution that claims social justice. The results of our action in November 2018 are as follows: the implementation was delayed and Vice-Provost, Academics Michael Bennaroch conducted community consultations on the matters and they are still ongoing. As we know community consultations don't necessarily mean that something transformative and justice-seeking/focused will result. In the current report online titled Ryerson University 2019-20 Free Speech Report notably absent was mention action that condemned their attempt and the reasons why. As of now they university is still consulting and hasn't implemented a new policy as of yet.

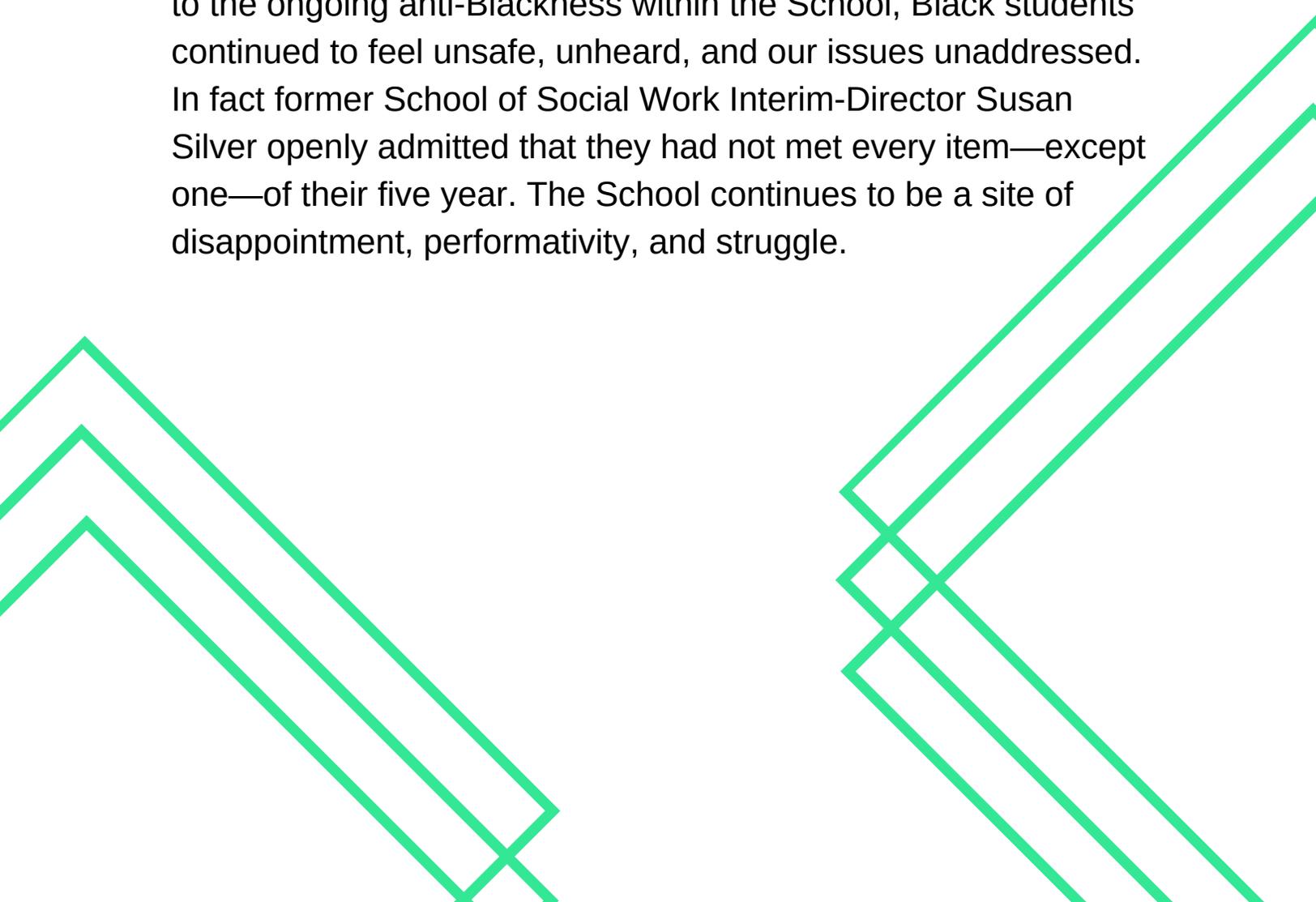
## *Anti-Black Racism in graduate program of the School of Social Work*

The issue of anti-Black racism, and anti-Indigenous racism, is an historical, consistent, and ongoing issue within the School of Social Work. The administration of the 2016-17 & 2017-18 has deeply struggled to address these violent and oppressive dynamics, including barely meeting what they committed to as a five year plan in response to our October 2016. Other than a few curriculum changes, Black life in the School of Social Work has shown to be dire, especially for those Black students who choose to challenge their instructors—whether that instructor be Black, Indigenous, racialized or white.



# Key Issues

Within the first few weeks of the year starting Black students within the Master of Social Work program experienced erasure through being called “just settlers” and claims of being appropriative for using medicines integral to Black people’s spiritual practices. When Black students, and subsequently other non-Black students, challenged the faculty member asserting these beliefs and other problematic behaviour, this faculty member blatantly ignored/dismissive Black students speaking. A collective letter was sent and the faculty member was no longer instructor for the course. However, this in tandem to the ongoing anti-Blackness within the School, Black students continued to feel unsafe, unheard, and our issues unaddressed. In fact former School of Social Work Interim-Director Susan Silver openly admitted that they had not met every item—except one—of their five year. The School continues to be a site of disappointment, performativity, and struggle.



# Key Issues

## *Over-policing on campus and incoming Ryerson Students' Union refusal to address*

With the welcoming of a new executive team to the Ryerson Students' Union, we were deeply concerned with the public image of “progression” (refresh) asserted by this team, particularly with the presence of President Vanessa Henry. Previously, in response to our March 2018 action against the Toronto Police Services-Ryerson Partnership regarding educating unmarked police officers in our classrooms on the topic of “diversity and bias avoidance”, the current President spoke out against this action. With their claim to progression, we took to the executive our concerns with President Henry’s comments and the pushback and blatant ignoring resulted in BLC-Ryerson not endorsing any slate this year. Subsequently, on May 1, 2019 (their first day in office) we released a public call for the RSU executive team to put forward a motion similar to that of the York Federation of Students’ voted-in motion supporting the dismantling of over-policing and creation of community-centred forms of safety on their campus. The overall response from the RSU executive team has been refusal, and a collective meeting that occurred in May between our two groups showed this. Specific individuals within the executive team—particularly President Henry, was resistant to our call and reasoning that centred the safety of Black people (whether as community members, students, staff, and faculty).



# Specific 2018-2019 Events

## *Black Frosh-2018*

- Black Frosh Meet & Greet
- Black & Indigenous Solidarity Cafe
- Black Student/Community Group Fair
- Black on Campus: Political Education 101 (Pascale Diverlus)
- Black Frosh Lecture (Yusra Khogali, Debbie Douglass, OmiSoore Dryden, Beverly Bain)
- Black Frosh Open Mic Night
- Black Frosh Closing Celebration

*Meet and Greet 2018*

*Open Mic Night (Faduma Mohamed)*

*Black on Campus Series*

- Tracing Black Liberation through History (Hawa Mire)
- Arts and Activism (Rose Senat)
- Building Blocks to Organizing (Rodney Diverlus)
- Surviving Academia: Tips and Tricks to Know in Post-Secondary (Carol Sutherland)
- Misogynoir in Activism (Yusra Khogali)
- Arts & Activism: Photo Exhibition

*Black in Your Faculty Healing Space for Black Master of Social Work Students (Yusra Khogali)*  
*Black Student Reading Circles (Distinguished Visiting Professor Christina Sharpe)*

# Budget

*Budget: \$23 300*

## Sources:

- Office of Equity Community and Inclusion
- Faculty of Community Services
- Unifor Sam Gindin Chair
- School of Social Work
- School of Performance
- Yeates Graduate Studies
- Early Childhood Studies
- School of Child and Youth Care
- Yellowhead Institute
- Faculty of Science
- School of Sociology
- Student Initiative Funding

## Expenditures

Action-Related: \$978.98Public

Education: \$21 066

BLC-Ryerson General Supplies/Operations: \$450.77