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Rosalind Hampton et Cora-Lee Conway

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Résumé de l'article

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(RE)CALL AND RESPONSE: ORGANIZING WITH COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY TALKS

ROSALIND HAMPTON

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CORA-LEE CONWAY

THE KING'S UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This article documents and analyses Black student-led organizing by Community-University Talks, a collective of academics and local community members who organized together between 2012 and 2017 in Montreal. The co-authors of this article founded Community-University Talks in December 2011, as Black women who had just begun doctoral studies in Educational Studies at McGill University. Now, a decade later, they recall and respond to this experience through narrative inquiry involving collaborative remembering, writing, and dialogue. This study is further guided by a critical engagement with the material culture of the Community-University Talks archive, which includes notes and correspondences, minutes from meetings, reports, event posters, memorabilia, photographs, and video footage.

Keywords: Black student organizing, Black student success, Canadian universities

Résumé

Cet article documente et analyse l'organisation par des étudiants Noirs au travers de Community-University Talks, un collectif de chercheuses et chercheurs et de membres de la communauté locale qui se sont regroupés entre 2012 et 2017 à Montréal. Les co-auteures de cet article ont fondé Community-University Talks en décembre 2011, en tant que femmes Noires qui venaient d'entamer des études doctorales en éducation à l'Université McGill. Aujourd'hui, dix ans plus tard, elles se souviennent de cette expérience et y réagissent par le biais d'une enquête narrative réalisée en collaboration et impliquant le souvenir, l'écriture et le dialogue. Cette étude est également guidée par un engagement critique envers la culture matérielle trouvée dans les archives de Community-University Talks, qui comprennent des notes et des correspondances, des procès-verbaux de réunions, des rapports, des affiches d'événements, des souvenirs, des photographies et des séquences vidéo.

Mots-clés : organisation des étudiantes noires, réussite des étudiantes noires, universités canadiennes

What is the university, until we arrive?... It is where the powerful become more powerful. It is where the norms of this abnormal power, this [nation], receive the ultimate worship of propagation. It is where the people become usable parts of the whole machine: Machine is not community.... [T]he university is not where the person learns how [they are] a valuable member of an always valuable society of people. It probably takes a college graduate to explain the 'higher learning' that does not teach the un-earned sanctity and value of each person.

Yet it waits there, at the end of coercion, the citadel of technique and terminology. (Jordan, 1981, pp. 50–51)

Preface: Fall 2011

We met at McGill University, a gated university campus situated in the middle of Montreal's vibrant urban centre. On

the inside of the gates, a sprawling front lawn is split down the middle by a paved walkway. The walkway leads, on a slight incline, to an imposing 19th century building designed in Classical style, with Roman Tuscan columns. Looking up the walkway, a larger-than-life-sized statue of the man the university is named after stands to the right. The tomb containing his skull and bones is situated straight ahead at the top of the path. Off to the left, a relatively nondescript memorial stone identifies the Iroquois town of Hochelaga "near" the land upon which the university is built (McGill University, n.d.).

McGill is a settler colonial university, founded in 1821 and thus older than the Canadian state itself. The university is built on the traditional land of the Kanien'kehá:ka, settled and cultivated as the former estate of James McGill, a Scottish colonial merchant and slave owner who died in 1813. In his will, McGill bequeathed the land to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, with the intention that a university be built to ensure his legacy. His intentions were realized. By the turn of the 20th century, McGill University was well-established as a central institution of the expanding settler nation, and part of a British imperial network of colonial universities propagating western European civilization and ideology (hampton, 2020a). In the broader context of Québec, a francophone majority province in which the Québécoise people were denied access to public education well into the 20th century, McGill has served as a symbol of British colonial victory and enduring Anglo-Canadian power and prestige (hampton, 2020a).

So, the elite university was there when we arrived, as if it always had been, and as if it were entitled to be. As if. The university was there, on the hill, carved into and built over resistance to colonial thievery, unceded Indigenous land, unceded Black and Indigenous life; presuming itself "The" site of choice, knowledge, and possibility. We were new admissions to a PhD program, each faking our way through the opening days of the semester feeling academically, mentally, and financially unprepared. Some of our colleagues who had completed previous degrees at elite institutions already seemed fluent in academic languages and logics.

Recall: In our first class of the year, I had an engaging conversation with a colleague during a pair-share exercise. When the class was reconvened and we were invited by the professor to share what we had discussed, the student I had been paired with spoke of our conversation as if to translate it for an academic audience. The connections I had sensed between us were rendered im-

perceivable to me in what she said—more specifically, in how she said it. It felt like a betrayal, and it also felt like my problem. However, I remember something else from that same first class: your wonderful, loud, laughter. I did not hear what had been said to provoke it. But you were on the other side of the room and I saw you, and I heard the music and soul and spirit of that laugh and it helped me make it through that first class. (rosalind, reflexive notes, January 16, 2022)

Response: I don't remember my first encounter with you, but I do remember experiencing deep relief that I was not the only Black student in the cohort. That was followed by intense anxiety that we would be pitted against each other, because that's just what happens when you dare to be more than one. Beyond that, I just hoped that we would earnestly like and respect each other.

We came to know each other well through walking home together after our evening classes. I remember how we would talk our way down the hill, and often I would walk past my apartment to continue our conversations. Sometimes we extended our social time in the grocery store, you looking for fun vegan things and organic coffee, me looking for sales and omnivore delights. You promised not to tell me why I should stop eating eggs—I'm still grateful for that! We talked about our coursework, experiences of schooling, Black communities, activism, relationships, and families. We talked about how the hell it was possible that we found ourselves in an "elite" university with not one Black professor in the faculty of education. Not one. (Cora, reflexive notes, January 16, 2022)

Introduction

This article is a critical reflection about community organizing as Black graduate students at McGill University from 2011 into 2017. It is also an article about remembering these experiences as a collaborative form of research, both to document Black student organizing, and to analyze what our experiences suggest about academic success and the conditions under which Black students succeed in university. We intentionally destabilize and expand on dominant notions of student success, making room for multiple interpretations of what a desired outcome for a university student might be. We note that *to succeed* also means for Black students to inherit from and follow after other Black students. We write with gratitude to those who preceded us,

and care and respect for those who succeed us.

We have opened with a quote by Black feminist writer June Jordan. Jordan began her teaching career in New York in the late 1960s, positioning herself in solidarity with racialized student coalitions demanding open admissions to university and programs of Black Studies. Jordan and other radical thinkers who entered academia at this time had not been seduced by the "idealized university" (hampton, 2020a, p. 66); they had come to subvert it. They had come not to become usable parts of the capitalist machine, but to clog its gears and turn it on itself. Although the U.S. state expansion of the public university during this time was part of a broader strategy of managing migration, policing Black and Brown populations, and furthering imperial interests (Burden-Stelly, 2018; Gumbs, 2014); activist students and scholars asserted Black Studies as an intervention to radically change the university. Through bringing Black academia into dialogue with the knowledges and intellectuals of the street, Black Studies could be "a torch to burn down a decadent world" (Hare, 1970, p. 2). Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2014) has powerfully written about how Black feminists like June Jordan and Audre Lorde used their roles as professors in public universities to intervene "against the violent political and ideological management of racialized populations in an emergent neoliberal political order" (p. 242). We have opened this article with the words of June Jordan to remind us that they, and the tradition of Black academic praxis they represent, also come before us. That "a decolonizing university exists already amid the colonial" (paperson, 2017, p. 52).

We have also opened this article with a (re)call and response exchange between us. The meaning and practice of call and response is central to how we have approached this study, and we discuss this further, below. We begin with the exchange as a way of grounding this writing in our friendship and remembering how we first encountered one another. This is also to both acknowledge and trouble our assumed-shared Blackness. It is to ask ourselves what being Black, and encountering another Black woman, meant to us in a moment framed by an ambiguously hostile environment that "welcomed," alienated, and drew us together. Writing now, a decade later, we reclaim that moment and what happened next as critical sites of research, for ourselves and for the racialized grad students who may find themselves "imposturing" their own always-already valuable selves into research-one university classrooms today.

The whiteness of the Canadian university is a well-researched and documented fact (Bannerji et al., 1991; Henry et al., 2017; Walcott, 2014). We knew not to expect a large Black student population or institutionalized program of Black Studies at this school, even though Black students had been studying at McGill for generations before we did. They too had found themselves having to adapt to the magnitude and depth of its institutional whiteness (hampton, 2020a). Our most immediate source of hope was that we were a *we*, that neither of us was *the only*. We could see, recognize, and value each other, in an institutional context set on invisibilizing Black women. School had already taught us that no matter what professorial benevolence we encountered, our presence was a precarious, conditional one, and that our Blackness was meant to be ignored, at best. So, we attended to and showed up for one another from day one. A deep friendship formed, and we vowed to create space for our work, support and care for ourselves, and build community with other students—especially Black students who might be feeling isolated. We would help each other stay, for as long as we wanted to.

Like most students, we had come to grad school hoping it would provide a route to more stable careers and work that matters to us and people we care about. We believed in accessible, critical, and relevant education. We both had internalized notions of university as the pathway to freeing ourselves from dependency on those who exploit and destroy us (Jordan, 1981). rosalind had entered graduate school as a community artist and educator working within local Black communities, imagining that she would gain skills and access resources to further that work. She did not anticipate applying to a PhD program but felt compelled to continue studying and pursuing research. Cora had a myriad of personal reasons for applying to this PhD program, and for leaving her home, full-time job, and marriage:

> I had very little expectation of the PhD experience, I just knew that I was putting myself back in that space of scholastic rigor because it could hold me. In a moment of significant transition I sought out the "comfort" of school to hold me and anchor me. (Cora, reflective notes, January 16, 2022)

Curiously, both of us had only applied to the program and university in which we found ourselves—this was our one shot. By the end of our first semester together, we had co-founded Community-University Talks, a Black student-led collective that organized together for the next five-plus years.

From Damage to Desire

This work responds to Tuck's (2009) argument for an epistemological shift away from damage-centred research to a desire-based framework. Black and Indigenous peoples have been subjected to trans-generational psychological, physical, and structural violence in the name of education and encounters with academic institutions (Mustaffa, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilder, 2013). Documenting the damage caused to us has been an important form of contemporary social science research, making formerly erased and ignored experiences known. However, damage-centred research alone risks pathologizing those harmed, and is not sufficient for "understanding the complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (Tuck, 2009, p. 416). Taking up a desire-based framework allows us to consider the desire to be a PhD student or to acquire a PhD as "multiplicitous and assembled from prior experiences" (Tuck, 2009, p. 418) that construct us as individuals. Centring desire in this way creates space to reveal and examine the potentials that already exist between reproducing and resisting academic institutions, and between predetermined outcomes of success and failure. As Coles (2021) explains, researching for Black desire does not focus on the brokenness of Black people, it is about how Black people inhabit and counter the "brokenness of the world" (Tichavakunda, 2021, p. 3). The focus of this inquiry then, is not the university's coloniality and whiteness, or the ways it fails to support Black students in successfully obtaining degrees and credentials. We are not writing to reach university administrators or contribute to institutional reform. We follow Andrea Davis's (2018) offering of her "own acts of retelling and of retrospection as both critical reflection and commitment to preserving Black women's presences in those spaces where they are most threatened–where their bodies and voices seem most out of place" (p. 71). We are writing primarily to Black graduate students, particularly those who identify as women and femmes, about how Black people and Black desire inhabit and counter the brokenness of the university.

Rethinking Success

It matters who defines student success and how it is defined. Success is typically assumed to be positive, desirable, and the only option to its opposite—failure. Moreover, academic literature often addresses indicators of success without necessarily defining what success is, in and of itself (Weatherton & Schussler, 2021). When student success is assumed to be a set of institutionally-defined outcomes, it relies upon and serves to reproduce institutional authority. Students succeed, in other words, through achieving fixed indicators of success. The neo-liberal university emphasizes individual, entrepreneurial productivity and measurable outcomes such as high grades, research funding, degree completion, and securing gainful employment (Chatterjee and Maira, 2014; Kloet & Aspenlieder, 2013). Many students also strive for these outcomes, and we do not seek to discredit or replace these aims. Rather, centring desire makes space to consider and grapple with the contradictions embedded in wanting to critique and refuse the colonial institution, and wanting to be a student and earn a degree from it. Centring desire thus repositions agency and creates the opportunity to choose; to define success on one's own terms, and conversely, to flout failure.

The literature shows that Black students' university experiences are largely shaped by knowledge acquired in secondary schooling, financial access, relevant mentorship and curriculum, and a campus culture in which they feel valued and connected (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Guiffrada et al., 2012; Grant & Ghee, 2015; hampton, 2020a; Strange & Cox, 2016). Many Black students at predominantly white universities even identify the social networks of support they are able to build as the most important determinant of their ability to persist through their programs (Patton, 2006). Although enduring school experiences of Black racialization and anti-Blackness can and do have negative, indeed devastating, effects on our bodies, the oppression-resistance dialectic does not represent the fullness of Black life (Coles, 2021; Moten, 2013; Tichavakunda, 2020, 2021).

Black students also understand their experiences in ways that are not predefined by the values and authority of the university (Tichavakunda, 2021). Most notably, many consider remaining tethered to family, community, and culture a priority while they study. hampton's (2020a) research demonstrates that some Black students assess their university experiences in relation to the opportunities they generate for self-determination and resistance. Likewise, Wane (2009) finds that Black women graduate students define their successes based on the degree to which they maintain self-reliance, spiritual practices, community connections, and challenge the status quo.

We are most interested in learning from conceptions and experiences of higher education that expand its purpose and meaning beyond a win/lose, success/failure competition to achieve institutional resources and recog-

nitions. As Choudry (2020) argues, "we need to constantly challenge and push open what counts as 'learning' at universities to the formal and informal knowledge and learning embedded in other spaces, experiences and struggles" (p. 30). Our work responds to calls for more research centring Black students' perceptions of their university experiences and what makes them successful (Blockett et al., 2022; Patton, 2006; Patton & Croom, 2017; Tichavakunda, 2021; Vickery, 2021), and examining practices of Black student placemaking in higher education (Tichavakunda, 2020).

Black placemaking addresses how Black people organize and create sites of belonging, persistence, and resistance, often within constrictive and hostile envirionments (Hunter et al., 2016; Tichavakunda, 2020). Rather than centring on racism, a Black placemaking analysis focuses on "the lives, structures, organizations, traditions, and practices that occur in Black places" (Tichavakunda, 2020, p. 7). Research on Black placemaking thus resonates deeply with our project, although we hesitate to identify our work as primarily about making place within the university. The university campus provided the geographic and institutional location where we first encountered one another, and from which we initially organized in accordance with our needs and desires (Tichavakunda, 2020). Especially during the first two years of organizing Community-University Talks (C-Uni-T), we engaged in Black placemaking and appropriated space on campus.

C-Uni-T (pronounced *see unity*) was oriented toward bringing members of academic and local Black communities together in dialogue and collaboration. It was rooted in shared commitments to formal and informal education informed by anticolonial and critical race discourses. We were involved in and influenced by a prolonged student strike over access to post-secondary education in Québec at the time, and serious discussions about the role of the university under conditions of neo-liberal capitalism (hampton, 2020b). With this in mind, our collective made good use of university resources when they were available to us with relatively no strings attached, but we did not seek to add to those resources through contributing to institutional development or reform. We did not want to become a club or service of the university, nor did we seek incorporation or government status as a non-profit organization. C-Uni-T organized as part of a network of activists supported by the local Quebec Public Interest Working Groups (QPIRGs) adjacent to the universities, allowing us to focus on building relationships and community amongst ourselves and with youth and local educators, artists, and cultural workers.

In remembering the work of C-Uni-T and what it meant to us, our emphasis is on how students do success as a collective, politicized practice of community-building and meaning-making, sometimes within the university, but as often without. Patton (2006) tells "the Black story" of Black student experiences of "a Black cultural centre on their campus" (p. 632), generating student-centred insights into the important role of the Black cultural centre as a "major piece of the university fabric" (p. 642) that provides Black students a "home away from home" (p. 644). Our related, yet distinct, project critically examines Black graduate student organizing with C-Uni-T to tell a Black story, one of many, of students succeeding without claiming the university as ours, and without mistaking it for a place that can be like a home.

Methodology

Narrative Inquiry

As a co-authored critical reflection, this article is both a process and product of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is "the study of experience as story" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477), based on the recognition that we come to understand ourselves, one another, and our individual and collective lives through stories we tell and are told (Amoah, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; King, 2003). There are many forms and methods of narrative inquiry, involving storytelling situated in time and place, and attentive to personal and social conditions and relationships (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Our approach draws on the theoretical insights and overlapping methods of Black feminist narrative inquiry, critical race counter-storytelling, autoethnography, and memory work.

Black feminist narrative inquiry centres the experiences of Black women, and addresses racial, gender, sexuality, and class oppression under racial capitalism (Amoah, 1997; Carty, 2014; Davis, 2018; Evans-Winters, 2019; Griffin, 2012; Taylor, 2017). Many critical feminist scholars articulate a responsibility to expose and interrogate colonial power relations in education and in the educational institutions within which we work (Ali, 2009; Carby, 2007; Davis, 2018; Razack et al., 2010). To this end, Black feminisms promote self-reflexivity, and subjective, situated narratives that challenge dominant narratives and connect individual and collective experience to broader social relations (Collins, 2009).

This is also critical race counter-storytelling, drawing on critical race theory and decentring ideological assump-

tions that have become normative in the academy (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). We are studying our own experiences for their broader significance, aligning our work with autoethnographic research as well. We are especially drawn to autoethnographic storytelling that fosters engagement and access to theory, a corrective to the intimidation and inaccessibility of academic jargon (Amoah, 1997; Ellis et al., 2011; Holman Jones, 2016, 2018). Counter-stories in research undermine academic elitism and notions of objective knowledge and neutral researchers. They call on us to think and write creatively from the basis of specific experiences (Amoah, 1997; hooks, 1994), to produce "aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 277). Critical autoethnography is well-suited to Black feminist analysis of power relations in higher education (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Warren-Gordon & Jackson-Brown, 2022; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Maraj, 2020; Ohito, 2019; Vickery, 2021); and is increasingly taken up to explore mutual and collective experiences and write polyvocal narrative (Camangian et al., 2021; Ngunjiri et al., 2010).

As Collins (2009) puts it, "knowledge for knowledge's sake is not enough—Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women's lived experiences and aim to better those experiences in some fashion" (p. 35). The knowledge, experiences, work, and desires of Black women are too often ignored and/or made foreign within the culture and discourses of Canadian academia (Carty, 2014; Davis, 2018; Flynn, 2014; Griffin, 2012; Henry, 2015; Wane, 2002). Over time, we may even be made foreign to ourselves, through subjection to white perception (Fanon, 1967), and because the competitive individualism of the university can impede our ongoing self-construction through trusting relationships in community with others. Through Black feminist inquiry we write to (re)member ourselves; to insist on our presence and all of our disparate parts (Davis, 2018; Dillard, 2012; Griffin, 2012). Hear Venus E. Evans-Winters (2019): "a progressive research agenda in Black feminist qualitative inquiry is a 'witnessing.' In the analysis process, in the call and response tradition, we are metaphorically asking, 'Can I get a witness?'" (p. 22).

In theorizing our lives, we can break habitual patterns of perception (Delgado, 1989; hooks, 1994), and story ourselves toward different meanings, possibilities, and arrangements that already exist. Understood as Black abolitionist practice, counter-storytelling is not only about adding more perspectives to existing discourses; it is a centuries-old rejection of the assumption that European values are universal, and that Western rationality and notions of democracy can generate justice for all (Baszile, 2014). Notions of Black students' success are rife with the tensions and overlap between European Enlightenment ideology that prioritizes individualism and emotional independence; and an Africana philosophical emphasis on community, emotional interdependence, solidarity, and mutual support (Birt, 2001; Chioneso, 2008; Guiffrada et al., 2012). In telling a Black story of student success, we are not suggesting that all Black students speak from a singular Black perspective or experience. We are telling a story about how students scripted into racialized social locations within and by the capitalist-colonial power relations of the university, develop friendships, political alliances, and study groups that refuse colonial mimicry, capitalist aspiration, and white patriarchal assimilation (hampton & Hartman, 2022; Harney & Moten, 2013; paperson, 2017).

Remembering with the Archive: Not-Lonely

Recall, or memory, is a process of making sense of experiences through ascribing meaning to them and their past, present, and future significance (Keightley, 2010; Kuhn, 2010; Mitchell & Pithouse-Morgan, 2014). In research, memory work involves remembering in a systematic, deliberate way; and from a place of "productive unknowing" that does not claim the authority of academic expertise in advance (Mitchell & Pithouse-Morgan, 2014, p. 94). Mitchell & Pithouse-Morgan (2014) identify memory work as originating as a form of collaborative feminist inquiry, intended to test our ways of knowing and generate knowledge about mutual self-construction and self-representation within broader cultural contexts.

We first started discussing memory work together when Cora was re-conceptualizing her PhD research. In preparing to write on memory in the fall of 2018, she sent rosalind her outline to invite comments and dialogue. We found that document in collecting emails for this study, as we were writing this article, only to realize that we had been talking about the notion of "(re)call and response" almost four years ago. Cora was preparing for comprehensive exams, and her notes begin:

   a. Memory-work
       i. Not-lonely – the collective experience brings into focus the system[ic] nature of the kinds of experiences that Black women may face...

Cora thus associates memory work with accessing "the collective experience," immediately suggesting it as a corrective to a presumed academic experience of loneliness. Our exchanges of comments on the document raise questions about individual and collective memory, the matter of accuracy, the process of conjuring memory and feelings. In capital letters Cora has typed, "RECALL AND RESPONSE," and rosalind has inserted a comment suggesting this would be a great heading for a section on "accessing/constructing collective memory." Neither of us had remembered that exchange when we submitted a proposal for this article three years later. Ironically illustrating its importance, we had forgotten we had ever discussed the idea of (re)call and response.

Our memory work has been deeply aided by field texts and artefacts in the C-Uni-T archive of digital, print, and audio-visual material. These form "the textual foundation" for this work (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 478), and include photographs, newspaper articles, public statements, event flyers, videos, posters, funding applications, minutes from meetings, correspondences stored in the C-Uni-T email account, and relevant emails from our personal accounts. In preparing this writing, we spent three months (January–March 2022) reviewing and discussing the material we had saved and collected. Throughout this process, we each took reflexive notes, such as those sampled above, which contribute significantly to this article. We exchanged emails, notes, and documents online; reminisced and discussed the project in phone calls; and engaged in collaborative writing over video calls. We have both moved in recent years and no longer live in the same province, but have been able to meet twice in person to see one another and review our work in progress.

On the one hand, 10 years is not so long as for the materials to speak to a forgotten era or conjure ancestral re-memories (Morrison, 2007). On the other hand, a lot has changed in the past decade, and we find ourselves recalling and responding with and to the archive in generative and unexpected ways. Cora had thought she had a "bad memory," but this study has made her realize that no one had ever asked her about experiential memories like these, memories that are stuck within her, and/or that she has intentionally held on to. Working with the archive is itself, "an embodied meaning-making process, constituted by human encounters with materials, self-reflexivity, lived experience and personal interpretations" (Rochat, 2021, p. 118). Remembering the past, we recall embodied sensations (knowledge) into the present. For example, remembering and studying our excite-

ment as we organized the first C-Uni-T event, we have felt excited in the now, and could analyze and write from that embodied recollection of the excitement of autonomous student organizing. Consistent with a desire-based framework, we have thought about the excitement itself: what precisely generated it, how we express it in email exchanges, and how it manifests in the collective's notes and material. What is the role of excitement in student organizing? Similarly, remembering conflict, and studying how the collective variously encountered, engaged, and tried to avoid conflict, we have felt sensations and emotions associated with those experiences. We have subsequently been able to see those feelings (or their shadows) in the collective's records: in the particular word choices, phrases, and tones of exchanges and notes; in facial expressions and body language captured in photographs; in what is written in formal, public-facing documents, and what is unwritten, but lingers between the lines. rosalind reflected,

> This study is making me remember that I'd actually put work into forgetting...but the longer we explore this the more I remember parts I'd kinda forgotten on purpose.... There were also tough times during the C-Uni-T years that we won't write about directly, but I'm not saying those parts aren't important. Just that remembering ain't easy. (reflexive notes, March 5, 2022)

Engaging these memories has reminded us of valuable aspects of who we are, and how we understand our identities as Black women educators (Dillard, 2016; Ohito, 2021). As Ohito (2021) writes, "Memory does work. Memories then, are verbs rather than nouns—they do things (to us, whether we want them to or not)" (p. 2). Ohito thus asserts that it is within our bodies, "where memory work and Black feminist thought meet and materialize" (2021, p. 5). In the section that follows, we provide a summary of our activities with C-Uni-T, honing in on our notion of the Talk Forum as the origins of the collective and its signature annual event.

Community-University Talks

Part of what prompted us to begin organizing together was that Cora was also trying to situate herself in a new city. She asked rosalind about Montreal Black communities and histories, and how she might meet local artists. The conversations underscored the lack of Black culture and people on campus, and from the outset C-Uni-T was oriented toward local communities as much as those on

campus. Many kinds of teachers and learners participated in community building, co-mentorship, and dialogue; engagement in the collective was fluid, informal, intergenerational, multilingual, and culturally diverse. We were part of a network of working groups organizing in and around the university, allowing us to selectively benefit from institutional resources while maintaining a sense of autonomy. With the exception of a one-time government grant for a major congress in 2013, C-Uni-T received the vast majority of our funding from local Québec Public Interest Research Groups (QPIRGs). This money was used to host activities, sponsor and co-sponsor events, and to offer two annual bursaries for Black youth to support educational goals as defined by the youth themselves. C-Uni-T sustained a strong working relationship with DESTA Black Youth Network (https://destabyn.org) throughout our existence, collaborating with youth and staff there on several occasions. Early in 2014 we joined an anticapitalist solidarity cooperative, Café l'Artère, which provided us with an additional community-based locale in which to gather and host events.

Our main activities flowed between educational event planning, academic co-mentorship, and mutual support. Over the five full years, C-Uni-T hosted five annual Talk Forums, which we discuss in detail below. Members of the collective gave academic and community presentations together and hosted and participated in a range of activities including film screenings, talks by Black professors, and arts-based workshops. In our largest and most ambitious event, the collective organized an international congress, welcoming 200 guests for 35 presentations and performances over two days in October 2013. We easily recall the 2013 congress as the climax of our organizing, given its size and scope, as well as the detailed records we kept of the organizing and event. In 2015, we collaborated with a Black community elder, Dolores Sandoval, in the organizing and performance of her autobiographical play, just months before her passing. Members of the collective also travelled to conferences together, gathered for meals, and supported one another's interests and projects beyond academia. As rosalind shared with Cora in one of our collaborative writing sessions,

> I know they weren't C-Uni-T events per se, but I keep thinking about your gospel choir concerts, about how a bunch of us used to go every year in December to hear that voice of yours, even if we never otherwise stepped foot in church. Those concerts were so dope! They felt SO GOOD, and we were so proud to know you! (March 12, 2022)

By mid-2014, the collective had become more publicly visible, and had grown and diversified, with various members working in pairs and small groups to plan and pursue activities. Our activities increased in this sense, as we transitioned from moving as one collective unit, to functioning as a centre-point for a range of initiatives. Through more dispersed organizing by and among members, we sought to grow opportunities for shared leadership and to discourage the tendency of some people in the university to misunderstand the collective as something belonging to us personally, as if a form of academic property. It was during this period that we also faced challenges related to individual and group identity politics, and necessarily sought to reassess and adjust. Consequently, we turned more inward and focused on the relationships we had, rather than on promoting or growing the collective. We never sought to make C-Uni-T a permanent fixture. The collective continued to work together in the ways that made sense to us, until what felt like a natural end in 2017 as members graduated, relocated, and pursued new career opportunities.

The record of our activities reveals three key overlapping phases of organizing over five-plus years, that we have identified as: (1) presence, outreach, and connecting; (2) growth, communication, and flourishing; and (3) shared leadership, reflection, and adapting (see Appendix A). We now turn our attention back to the beginning of the C-Uni-T story, to spotlight our notion of the Talk Forum as the founding mission and ethic of the collective, as well as an annual event. In what follows, we reflect on organizing our first Talk Forum, and analyze how it set a foundation for our work over the next several years.

The Talk Forum

C-Uni-T began as a Black History Month event, called Community-University Talk Forum, held on March 3rd, 2012. The day-long event was structured as a series of facilitated conversations inspired by an article by critical race theorist Tara J. Yosso (2005), "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth." Yosso (2005) theorizes overlooked forms of "cultural capital" that racialized students bring to their school experiences: familial, aspirational, linguistic, resistant, social, and navigational. We invited a selection of students, community workers, artists, and professors to read the article, and prepare to facilitate conversations about its relevance in our contexts.

In planning the event, we had already begun to express the desire to make it an annual one, eventually understand-

ing ourselves as initiating a collective. In this way, before the Talk Forum had taken place, we were already experiencing its success. Our email exchanges leading up to the event reflect tremendous momentum, and our excitement was increasingly palpable. rosalind was in communication with members of local Black communities, confirming attendance and facilitator bios, finalizing the program; Cora was in touch with allies on campus and managing budget issues. rosalind shared responses from local youth and community members who were looking forward to attending; she was thrilled about hosting Black community at the university, and for Cora to meet some of these friends. This was the beginning of our placemaking activity, and we were imagining it as the creation of collective Black community-university space. We were concerned about accessibility, both in terms of limiting the use of academic jargon, and in terms of physical access to the gathering.

We were able to use a large bright room in a small building on the grounds of the Faculty of Education for the event—the same room in fact, where we had first encountered one another in class. We fantasized about flying the African liberation flag on the face of that building, and joked in nervous anticipation about the event ending up like "one of those parties that advertise on Facebook and get TOTALLY outta control." We LOL and LOLOL—"As my grandmother would say: 'I dead wid' laugh!'" (email exchanges, February 26, 2012). We found humour in the stark contrast of a Black community gathering in this space that we otherwise experienced as so profoundly white. It felt like a major intervention on campus, and the humour also relied on how ludicrous that very feeling was. We were not hosting a party, or at all concerned about things getting out of hand. We were expressing how the very idea of a diverse presence of Black community members at the university bordered on the surreal.

We emailed back and forth every day, all day and into the overnights. We were also managing responsibilities to family, our respective research assistant and teacher assistant duties, and school assignments. rosalind was full-on involved in student activism on campus at this point, and Cora was preparing to run as a candidate for student government. We were thoroughly exhausted, and yet several comments suggest how energized and inspired we were by the organizing:

> This is great! I don't want to do any of my other work at this point of time!!! I'm not motivated to work on anything else really—dang!... How am I going to focus on anything else this week!

> I SO FEEL THAT! ...Right now I'm in Black folks' reunion mode!! (email exchanges, February 26, 2012)

The words "How am I going to focus on anything else" is not a question; it is a declaration. We were putting Black community front and centre, and, when possible, applying what we were studying to that end. And we were succeeding. Our emails reflect how we were learning critical race-class analysis, through coursework and involvement with the student movement. For example, a few weeks before the event, rosalind shared that after a course reading and a discussion about capitalism in one of her courses, "I just cannot bring myself to use the word capital" in the framing of the event (email, January 19, 2012). This prompted discussion between us, and the decision to use terms like "cultural resources" and "cultural wealth" instead of Yosso's (2005) use of "cultural capital." We landed on the theme, "Engaging Black Community Cultural Resources" (Table 1).

Having pieced together funding for this first event from institutional sources available to us as students, we designed an event program in which we introduce ourselves. Particularly striking to us, looking back now, is how we present ourselves as both a cohesive team and as two very different people in terms of life stage, socio-economic background, ethnicity, culture, and prior professional and academic work. We wrote in the 2012 Talk Forum program,

> our friendship has provided both of us with a point of departure from which to move out into the [university] community—both together and in our separate endeavors—while our ongoing conversations have been a strategy for re-centering ourselves as Black women graduate students.

The event was attended by approximately 40 people, including children, parents, students at all levels of schooling, professors, artists, and community workers. After a day of facilitated and informal conversations, sharing art and performances and a meal from the local Caribbean restaurant, the C-Uni-T collective was officially born. The Talk Forum became our annual event, and we began to discuss plans for moving forward. We were clear that we did not want the initiative to become dependent on the university in any significant way, including financially, and that we did not want to treat the events or the community as an academic "data bank...no can do. Autonomy is so important, especially for something as sacred as this" (email exchange, March

Table 1

Facilitated Discussions, 2012 C-Uni-T Talk Forum

Session theme	Yosso's (2005) concept/s	Sources of knowledge
Community as Extended Family	Familial capital; Aspirational capital	Extended/ chosen family; community memory; ability to maintain hope and futurity
Language	Linguistic capital	Multiple languages, linguistic styles, including arts, storytelling, performance
Resistance	Resistant capital	Opposing inequity and racism
Navigating Social Institutions	Social capital; Navigational capital	Community networks, contact, support; strategies of maneuvering through racially hostile institutions

5, 2012). We knew to be wary of the institution, and certainly never considered our work with the collective as something we should be paid for. We were aware of how issues around funding—both having it and not having it—have so often been the downfall of Black organizing.

These ethics would continue to inform our work, and the annual Talk Forum is a revealing thread that we can trace through the collective's existence (Table 2).

The following year we invited participants in the Talk Forum "to consider the ways in which the simultaneous project of finding roots and staying rooted contributes to the notion and construction of community." In 2014, the Talk Forum discussed "how have we and how can we continue to acknowledge and celebrate our differences and our collective 'Blackness'? How do we build strong communities across all sorts of differences in positions, identities, and beliefs?" The final two Talk Forums we held were more inward facing, providing the collective members opportunities to convene and engage in conversation in a less structured manner.

We organized our final Talk Forum, in 2016, as part of an intergenerational Black community retreat. In hindsight, this suggests our increasing sense that many of our paths were diverging, as members graduated and moved on to other places and careers. We did not know that it would be our final major group activity together, but what an appropriate one it was. We spent two days at a cottage. We went for walks in the woods, built campfires, and cooked and ate meals together. We sang and danced in the kitchen. We talked about all the things. We watched and debated

Béyonce's "Lemonade" video and Cora got salty with some of us for being too academic about it. One of the recipients of that year's youth bursary joined us with her young child. We talked about parenting. We comforted members coping with illness. We celebrated a member's birthday.

One of our favourite memories of the trip was when the two of us went for a walk together with Cora's dog Lola, a little white bichon frise, and part of the collective from day one. As we walked down the path engrossed in conversation, Lola suddenly dropped the stick she was carrying, and dove into a mud puddle on the side of the road. She rolled around, playfully digging in and kicking up, as her fluffy white fur became thick with the dark brown muck. In a cell phone video that we captured in the moment, Cora calls her dog's name incredulously, alternating between that wonderful melodic laugh of hers, and demanding to know what Lola is doing and why. We are laughing so, so hard. This is not superficial, our laughter is deep. Echoing Justin Coles (2021),

> Black joy, as defined here, is the outward or inward pleasure derived from controlling the narrative of one's Black life; being able to live for one's own Black desires, knowing that there are structures in existence to block any joyous relishing in Blackness (pp. 4–5).

Discussion

In many ways C-Uni-T was the soul of our journey; our way of doing grad school, and much more. In this discussion we highlight the importance of self-directed student commu-

Table 2

C-Uni-T Talk Forums, 2012–2016

Date	March 3, 2012	March 30, 2013	April 5, 2014	April 27, 2015	June 10–12, 2016
Theme	*Engaging Black Community Cultural Resources*	*Up From the Roots*	*Solidarity Across Differences*	*The Future of C-Uni-T*	*Black Community Retreat*
Location	McGill Faculty of Education Coach House	McGill Faculty of Education Coach House	Café l'Artère Coopérative Solidarité	DESTA Black Youth Network	Domaine des Montagnais (chalet), Estrie Québec

nity organizing as distinct from institution building, before returning our focus to notions of student success.

While we were involved in other student activism that directly confronted the university, the C-Uni-T collective generally did not make demands on the administration to change. Rather, we centred Black community work and went about creating the conditions that would support our journey and those of people around us. While such work is not always described as "activism," it entails strategies that in and of themselves represent critical confrontations with institutional power (Collins, 2009). As Jordan (1981) reminds us, "life appealing to live, and to be, and to know a community that will protect the living simply because we are alive: This is the menace to university curriculum and standards" (p. 53). An autonomous learning community that centres Black learners and teachers and promotes anticolonial thought, that is both connected to the university, but not beholden to it, is a menace to the culture of whiteness that dominates higher education. We see strength in organizing wherein structure, form, and agenda are matched to particular generations of students and socio-historic contexts.

C-Uni-T's cohort model of community organizing has stuck with both of us as a priority. Cora was able to enact this in her job in student residence, particularly with youth who had come to the university through a scholarship program for African students:

> I arranged to connect with some of these students, to get a sense of their experiences and gain insights on how I could be supportive to them. What I learned from listening to them angered me, and simultaneously gave me a sense of great purpose. Their experiences were complex. While the criteria for their admission was just as

rigorous as any other scholarship student, (mis)perceptions of their Blackness and African-ness undermined their presumed scholastic deservedness. Their presence at the university was often read as a response to their needs rather than accomplishments. They shared countless examples of microaggressions and overt racial hostility, and yet their overwhelming gratitude for the opportunity to study abroad also prompted a beholden-ness to the institution. My experiences with C-Uni-T informed how I was able to help students navigate these tensions: through building community with them. Organizing with the collective had also given me the courage to initiate collaborations with colleagues in that job, to support not only students but one another, and to insist we re-examine the policies and practices within student housing that undermine racialized students overall. (Cora, reflexive notes, February 7, 2022)

For rosalind, experiences with C-Uni-T directly inform how she now works with graduate students in Black Studies. All of her courses require students to work in study groups all semester, and she supervises students collectively, as a diverse cohort, with expectations of co-mentorship and collaboration across differences.

> I think I'm just realizing now how much my experiences with C-Uni-T taught me. Because I was a community worker in Montreal much of my life before grad school, organizing came quite easily to me at the time. But what I may not have realized was that I was learning about Black community organizing within academia—the belly of the beast. I hadn't been that close to power before, and was pretty naive about how, in university, even community work can be a site of competitive individualism

and career posturing! I think one of the things I'm most proud of us for is how we resisted those sorts of distractions, or at least most of them, and kept on keepin' on. I think that's what I'm most interested in teaching the students I work with now. That we can hang onto ourselves, and keep doing important work as we define it, despite the noise. (rosalind, reflexive notes, March 10, 2022)

Ultimately, although we were not conscious of it at the time, C-Uni-T taught us profound lessons about student success. By the time Cora was working in a student residence, she was disengaging from doctoral studies. Much of her professional work veered toward understanding how the literature she was reading on student success failed to capture what she was observing as a staff person and had experienced as a student.

Doctoral school completely upended me, intellectually and financially, but it also made me. It made me more empathetic, more open to other ways of knowing, other ways of being, other ways of expressing what I/we experience. (Cora, reflective notes, January 16, 2022)

The process of recalling these memories has been a powerful one. Combing the archives, emails and files for photos and messages about organizing has brought to the foreground my raison d'être at that time: the PhD. Being a PhD student offered me the identity of someone succeeding in higher education. Just mentioning that I am pursuing a PhD provides me credibility that I do not feel comfortable accepting and yet continue to wield in introductions and professional bios. The learning amidst organizing, the community building, and mutual upliftment of C-Uni-T all made it possible for me to be at the university. Mine was not the traditional university experience. Rather than pursuing the degree, what kept me at the university was a consciousness of connection, accountability to friendships; it was creating opportunities for young brilliant Black scholars to have access to each other, and to connect. I have not gained the PhD, but I have been engaged with the scholarship and most importantly, in the work. (Cora, closing reflection, March 12, 2022)

To be honest I'm still wrapping my head around the fact that I'm now a professor of Black Studies. In a way I feel like my trajectory betrays me: with all of my opposition to the university and the relations it reproduces, here I am, both alumna and on the tenure track. I wonder how our motivation to organize ourselves might have been different if there had been a Black Studies program, or Black cultural centre, or Black graduate student caucus when we arrived at the university. I guess in my work now, at a time when Black Studies is becoming more institutionalized in Canadian universities, I'm trying to find ways to hang onto the community impulses of C-Uni-T, the ways of doing things that do not translate well in the academy, that sometimes "make no sense," because they are not governed by the logics of racial capitalism. My anchor in traditions of Black radical thought saves me every time—not-lonely. The more I read though, the more I remember that Black people been doin' Black Studies on our own all along. (rosalind, closing reflection, March 12, 2022)

Writing in 1969, June Jordan told us that Black Studies does not require us to separate ourselves from the "identity of the powerless," nor must we "learn to assume the identity of the powerless, in a powerful way" (1981, p. 65). Rather, Jordan writes, in order to liberate homebase, Black students "must understand homebase" (1981, p. 65)—and she writes it as one word. We take Jordan's use of homebase here as a reference to Black community and to the communities and families (both biological and chosen) in which we experience a sense of love and belonging. We also understand homebase as a reference to freedom—proclamations of "1-2-3 free me!" upon returning to homebase in a game of hide and seek; returning to the base without having been found (out); if found, and chased, running for one's life, to return without being tagged, or worse, caught. Homebase can be whatever, and wherever we say. It can be a tree. It can be an intentional marker on the ground, picked up and moved when the game is over. But when we make it the base, when we say it's the base, it's the base (until we decide it's time to go).

Conclusion

This article is written for students—especially Black and Indigenous students, for whom today's university may be waiting, but is not ready. You will surprise the university and expose its discourses of "equity, diversity and inclusion." Students have always claimed space in universities to pursue emancipatory education, and many before you have also refused to accept the priorities of neo-liberal racial capitalism as our own. Know that there are other ways of being at the university, and that your ways of being are valuable. They can help show you what is possible and help you

find others with whom to create dynamic learning communities that support your work, and success, as you define it. We hope that this article has found you and offers you stories and analysis that validate and inspire your organizing together. This is not to absolve the university of its responsibilities to Black students. Rather, it is to be clear that the institution's limitations are not y/our own.

Both of us achieved what we set out to do in doctoral studies. Cora had sought a "space of scholastic rigor" that could hold her through a period of life transition. rosalind had sought to continue and grow her engagements with/in Black communities through activism and arts. Both of us had hoped that doctoral studies would move us toward new careers and greater financial stability—and it did. At the time of this writing, Cora works as the director of an educational non-profit for K–12 students and teacher professional development. rosalind is a professor of Black Studies. The details of our journeys and outcomes, however, have often been unexpected. We variously complied with institutional demands and norms, and at times were complicit in its power relations. Working and studying within the university means living these contradictions, getting clear about who we are, and figuring out what we are and are not willing to compromise on, what we are and are not willing to change in ourselves. A sense of self-determination and choice is key, and perhaps that too is what so many of us come to university to learn. Ultimately, our success as students relied on the same forms of communal wealth that we discussed in our first Talk Forum. C-Uni-T can be seen as a compelling example of how centring the values and knowledges of our communities can expose and destabilize white, middle-class institutional norms and the logic that upholds them. Our organizing was not exceptional; students have always organized and mobilized in important ways both within and far beyond the universities. We hope that many, many more of you will write your stories too.

Acknowledgements

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Contact Information

rosalind hampton
rosalind.hampton@utoronto.ca

Appendix A

Community-University Talks Overview (2011–2017)

Organizing phase	presence, outreach, and connecting		growth, communication and flourishing		shared leadership, reflection, and adapting	
Dates	Dec. 2011–Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012–Aug. 2013	Sept. 2013–Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015	Sept. 2015–Aug. 2016	Sept. 2016–Aug. 2017
Coordinator	rosalind	rosalind	rosalind	rosalind	Cora	Cora
Working Group Status	N/A	QPIRG McGill working group	QPIRG McGill working group	QPIRG McGill working group; QPIRG Concordia working group	QPIRG McGill working group; QPIRG Concordia working group	QPIRG McGill working group
Collective orientation	Outreach: local Black community members, Black student groups on campus	Collective building, increasing bilingualism	Communications	Shared leadership	C-Uni-T as Locus of connection	
Annual Talk Forum	(March 3rd, McGill Faculty of Education, Coach House) *Engaging Black Community Cultural Resources*	(March 30th, McGill Faculty of Education, Coach House) *Up From the Roots*	(April 5th, Café l'Artère) *Solidarity Across Differences*	(April 27th, DESTA Black Youth Network) *The Future of C-Uni-T*	(June 10th–12th, Estrie, Québec) *Black Community Retreat* (organized by rosalind hampton and Elena Stoodley)	N/A
ACTIVITIES						

Organizing phase	presence, outreach, and connecting		growth, communication and flourishing		shared leadership, reflection, and adapting	
Dates	Dec. 2011–Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012–Aug. 2013	Sept. 2013–Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015	Sept. 2015–Aug. 2016	Sept. 2016–Aug. 2017
Varia		acquired working group status interviews on CKUT radio (Jan. 2013) Adjustment of Community-University Talks acronym to C-Uni-T	established website (c-uni-t.org) and Facebook group and page; became members of the Café L'Artère Coopérative de Solidairité	Interview, *Talking Radical Radio* (rosalind hampton) C-Uni-T first annual youth bursaries; Recipients: Kai Thomas and Elena Stoodley	Endorsements: McGill BDS Action Network; Israeli Apartheid Week Statement regarding BLM C-Uni-T Black community youth bursaries (organized by rosalind hampton & Désirée Rochat, in collaboration with DESTA, J2K, and Maison d'Haiti). Recipients: Jarad McFarlane and Slone Grant	Endorsements: Israeli Apartheid Week C-Uni-T youth bursary; Recipient: Annisha Sealey
Film screenings		*At the River I Stand* (California Newsreel), co-presented with AGSEM TA Union; McGill	*Mami Wata*, by Monique Dauphin, (organized by Désirée Rochat, in collaboration with Maison d'Haiti)	*Black & Cuba*, by Robin J. Hayes (organized by rosalind hampton, screened at DESTA)		
Events/presentations		*The life and work of Chinua Achebe*. Discussion co-presented with Institute for Islamic Studies; McGill	*Create Dangerously: Congress of Black Writers and Artists* (Oct. 18–20, 2013); McGill Students' Society of McGill	*Afro to the future: Pathways to liberation- A conversation on Afrofuturism*, co-sponsorship with Studio XX (HTMlles Festival)	Discussion: Black and Indigenous identities and experiences; McGill	McGill Community Engagement Day: Talk Black- Navigating Blackness in Online Spaces (Coordinator- Cora Conway)

Organizing phase	presence, outreach, and connecting		growth, communication and flourishing		shared leadership, reflection, and adapting	
Dates	Dec. 2011–Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012–Aug. 2013	Sept. 2013–Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015	Sept. 2015–Aug. 2016	Sept. 2016–Aug. 2017
Events/presentations (CONT'D)		An Evening with Audre Lorde. Presentations and film screening of *Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years*. Co-presented with Politics & Care; Café l'Artère	Black History Month event organized by the Racialized Student Network and the Social Work Graduate Students; McGill	Prisoner story-sharing project, *Talk to Me* (organized by Elena Stoodley and Kai Thomas, in collaboration with DESTA)	Soul Brothers with guest Professor Wesley Crichlow: A discussion about race, sexuality and gender (organized by Kai Thomas & Rudy Mudenge, hosted at DESTA)	Black Learners and Schooling in Québec: From elementary school to university. Presentations and community discussion held at DESTA (rosalind hampton and Lerona Lewis, with DESTA staff member Teeanna Munro)
		"Where the fuck am I?!" (panel) QPIRG Social Justice Days; McGill (rosalind hampton, Nantali Indongo, Christiana Collison)	RealTalk event at DESTA Black Youth Network (organized by Kai Thomas & Shaunna Strauss)	(Jan. 15-18) Dr. Anthony Stewart. Speaking events hosted at West Lounge of Royal Victoria College residence, McGill University, and at DESTA; C-Uni-T dinner with Dr. Stewart hosted by Cora Lee Conway in student residence. (Organized by rosalind hampton and Lerona Lewis; in-kind co-sponsorship from McGill residences via Cora-Lee Conway and Emily Yee Clare)	Rapprochement des Spiritualités Haïtiennes et Algonquins (C-Uni-T sponsored the attendance of Elena Stoodley)	*CKUT programming (Black History Month)*: • BLACK TALK: Blacks in Education (Lerona Lewis, rosalind hampton) • Blackness in leadership at McGill (Cora Conway) • Black History Month Edition of Montreal Sessions (Elena Stoodley)

Organizing phase	presence, outreach, and connecting		growth, communication and flourishing		shared leadership, reflection, and adapting	
Dates	Dec. 2011–Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012–Aug. 2013	Sept. 2013–Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015	Sept. 2015–Aug. 2016	Sept. 2016–Aug. 2017
Events/presentations (CONT'D)		"Steady Paces Towards Black Inclusive Spaces," (panel) Education Graduate Students' Society annual conference; McGill (rosalind hampton, Cora Lee Conway, Lerona Lewis, Rachel Zellars)	Brother Kaba Kamene event, organized by One Full Circle (C-Uni-T sponsored the attendance of Radney Jean-Claude and Kanisha Wright)	Afro-futurism workshop with Sharrae Lyon (organized by Chris Vaughn, Kai Thomas, & Elena Stoodley, in collaboration with Dawson College CEGEP)	C-Uni-T Black History Month pot-luck dinner, hosted by Cora Lee Conway in student residence.	James Lyng High School students visit to McGill (coordinated and hosted by Cora Conway)
				More than "a big liberal hug": Why Racial Literacy Matters Education Graduate Students' Society annual conference; McGill. (rosalind hampton, Lerona Lewis, Kai Thomas, and Michelle Hartman)	Community Launch of *Project Talk To Me* (Elena Stoodley & Kai Thomas); Prison Radio special; listening party hosted at DESTA	
				More than a big liberal hug": Building racial literacy through critical race praxis in education. Canadian Society for the Study of Education, annual conference (rosalind hampton, Lerona Lewis, Ashley DeMartini, Philip Howard, Emily Yee Clare)	Frank Wilderson speaking event at DESTA (organized by Kai Thomas, collaboration with African Studies at McGill)	

Organizing phase	presence, outreach, and connecting		growth, communication and flourishing		shared leadership, reflection, and adapting	
Dates	Dec. 2011–Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012–Aug. 2013	Sept. 2013–Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015	Sept. 2015–Aug. 2016	Sept. 2016–Aug. 2017
Events/presentations (CONT'D)				(May 21–24) trip to Black Canadian Studies Association conference, Halifax (members of C-Uni-T & Students of Colour Montreal) (April–June) Collaboration with elder Dr. Dolores Sandoval, organizing and performing in her play, Coloured Pictures in Family Frames (rosalind hampton, Kai Thomas, Elena Stoodley, Radney Jean-Claude)		