

December 2015

Falling into a rhythm



NU Ambassadors Fall Prospective Student Newsletter

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Hiya!

We are excited that you have shown interest in Northwestern University! We know that this is an exciting, busy, and maybe even overwhelming time for you. Take a deep breath, trust that your next step will all work out, and continue to put in the necessary work, but please have fun and enjoy this moment! It will be over before you know it.

We are thrilled to share with you some of the moments we have had on campus this Fall Quarter. With everything going on in the world, our personal lives, and classes it has been eventful, exhausting, and energizing. Enjoy a few snapshots of this quarter and please let us know if there is any way we can help you.

Happy Holidays and Good Luck with applications!

Ambassadors (Alexandria, Bobbie and Syedah)
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The Ritual: Passing the Torch of Success

The Ritual is more than a tradition for Northwestern’s community of color. It is a time of reflection for the graduating seniors as they enter their last year of undergrad and an indoctrination of a new class into a community that we have cherished throughout our undergraduate years. It is a time for the seniors to share our triumphs and defeats, and to pass along a torch of excellence that students will carry throughout their years here. It is paramount that we come together to have a collective voice on campus, and, perhaps more importantly, to support, confide in, empathize with, and just love one another. It is up to each one of us to lift each other up so that we can have the best possible experience and take full advantage of the privilege that is attending Northwestern University.

Lauren W. ‘16



The Class of 2016 gathers for their last Ritual

At the intersection of “Stay[ing] Woke” and Self-Care

Being a student at Northwestern is no piece of cake for the average student, but for those that identify as Black, it has been a particularly busy quarter. Nationwide, black college students at predominantly white institutions (PWI’s) have been making noise about inequalities, campus racism, and general dissatisfaction in the way administration seems to handle the concerns that students raise with regards to the black community. In the midst of empathizing with students at other PWI’s and reflecting on our own experiences here, we have also been engaged in dialogue over the future of The Black House, a vital safe space for black students and other students of color at Northwestern. With all of this going on, how does one stay on top of homework, extracurricular activities, “stay woke,” and still practice self-care? Though many of us struggled with this question, we soon learned we *did* have the answers, Sway.

NU black student initiatives

- NU chapter of Black Lives Matter, our Black Student Union’s (FMO) “Political Action Committee”
- Black People Speak
- MIXED’s talk “Roots: The Stories in My Hair”
- House on the Rock’s ongoing discussion of Christianity, being black and staying woke
- NU’s Call to Action in response to events at Mizzou

Two new student groups started this year that put black lives and the black experience front and center. A group of students started the NU chapter of Black Lives Matter. The group describes itself as the “Political Action Committee” for our Black Student Union, called FMO, and their “only requirement” is “individuals committed to black liberation.” It’s the perfect club for students who want direct involvement with the larger-scale national BLM movement, which of course also makes it a great way to “stay woke” and up to date on national events effecting the black community. Additionally, a group called Black People Speak started meeting biweekly for students “simply to meet each other and talk about our experiences.” The topic questions for their first meeting this October were, “What are your thoughts on the current state of the black community at NU? Has the community satisfied all your needs? If not, what would you like to see improved?” Naturally, meetings are held in The Black House, which fosters a great space for students to come together in community and feel comfortable talking about their experiences.

However, discussions don’t end there. A student group called Mixed (for students who identify as “mixed”) held a talk titled “Roots: The Stories In My Hair” this November during which natural hair was the topic of discussion, a topic of major significance that seems to go largely ignored in academia. Sustained Dialogue, an offshoot of Campus Inclusion & Community, hosted a “pop-up” dialogue on cultural appropriation. House on the Rock, a Black Campus Ministry, has been in discussion about the intersection of Christianity and being black and “woke.”

And on November 13, one of the biggest events of the quarter happened. Northwestern participated in the University of Missouri “Call to Action,” and hundreds of black students, students of color, and allies marched on Sheridan Road (Northwestern’s main road) screaming “From NU to Mizzou, we care about you!” among other chants, leading up to a moment that will go down in NU history, as the students stormed a groundbreaking ceremony to present NU’s president with their own list of demands.

Through all of the events and discussions hosted, along with the Call to Action, NU students this quarter have managed to find the intersection of being aware, active, and angry, while also finding joy, comfort, and peace through honest conversation and community. **Syedah C. ‘17**

Our Featured Freshman!



Noelle Angelique McGee

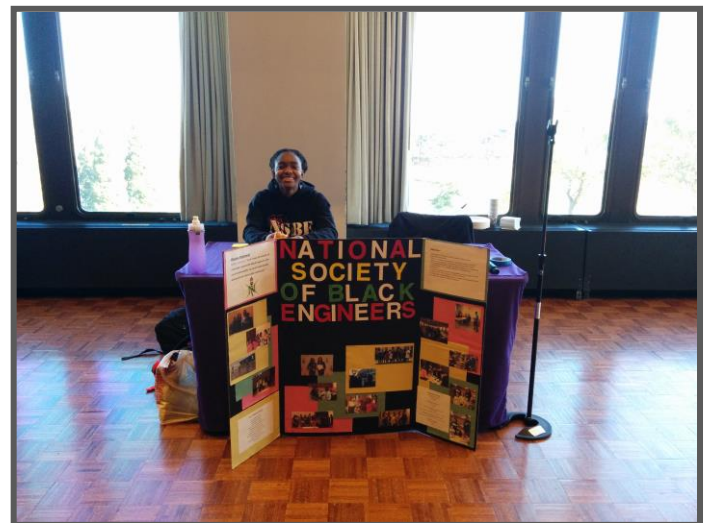
Hometown: Chicago, IL (South side)

Major: Secondary Education with English Concentration and Pre-Nursing Track

- I chose NU because I knew that I would have many doors open for me upon graduation. There are multiple resources and astounding professors who will teach courses here, and I didn't want to miss an opportunity like that. It would be my first step to a path of success.
- During my first quarter, I've learned to ask for help more. I wasn't afraid of asking for help in high school, and I always asked questions. In college, since I don't know a lot of people and college is a totally new field, I found myself struggling and falling back into my prideful ways and allowing myself to struggle alone when I didn't need to. It's a growing process, and I'm slowly getting back to advocating for myself.
- Advice that I have for prospective students is to keep fighting! Senior year is tough, and that definition can vary for everyone. Keep your end goal in mind, and you will see to the end of the struggles you're enduring now. What you believe in the inside is what's going to happen. So if you believe that you can make it through senior year with a certain goal, then that's what you'll do. You have to put your heart into the work you do. And most importantly, don't give up on yourself because you're your biggest cheerleader! :)

Making history: NU's first Black Student Organizations Fair

On October 25th Northwestern's chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) sponsored Northwestern's first annual Black Student Organizations Fair (BSOF) in Norris. In NSBE's mission statement, they are called to be culturally responsible black engineers who positively impact the community. In wake of recent events, NSBE thought it was important to host an event to not only further strengthen and foster the black community, but also to educate the Northwestern population on the activities black students participate on campus. Over the course of the two hours beginning at one, a steady stream of people came and bobbed their head to the Motown music in the background. Bobbie, a club leader at the event said that, "It was really exciting to see black students come together for the event. It was equally exciting to see some freshman stop by because an event such as the BSOF aims to help them get their footing." Nine organizations were able to attend and NSBE looks expand the total organization count to 16 next year.



In addition to NSBE, House on the Rock, African Student Association, For Members Only, Northwestern Community Ensemble, ReFresh, Muslim- Cultural Students Association and MIXED were present at the BSOF

A BSOF participant

Black Joy!



The organizers of the Living in Color showcase come together for a picture

#PrayforParis. #PrayforSyria... and Lebanon and Beirut and Baghdad and Japan and Mexico and Mizzou and THE WHOLE ENTIRE WORLD.

It seems like every single city and country needs a #hashtag because there's so much chaos right now. And a lot of it has to do with populations of color. Black students on college campuses around the nation seem to be heavily feeling the effects of a world that doesn't seem to prioritize their lives, adding the extra burden of advocacy and activism to already hectic class, work, and extracurricular-filled schedules. This would be a pretty dismal, burdensome experience if that were the end of the story. But there's one huge element that most people forget to mention: *black joy*.

Reclaiming blackness and basking in the beauty of it has honestly been one of my favorite parts of my college experience so far. Black Girl(s) at NU really do have Magic. In the midst of all the drama, Carefree Black Girls (and Boys) here make time to do carefree, normal, fun things like riding bicycles, going to see (and performing in) plays and talent shows, making art, praising the lort, watching movies, and yes, even eating chicken (and it was good). And most of all, we support each other!

Fall quarter has been a really special one for black joy. In fact, it was a sophomore named Joy who directed the play *For Colored Girls* that many of my closest friends performed in (and brought everyone to tears). The Living in Color Artist Showcase directly followed NU's Call to Action in solidarity with Mizzou on November 13th, and featured some of NU's best visual, vocal, and spoken word artists, and centered around issues of social justice. Then, following *that* event, Revitalizing Blackness hosted "Netflix and Chicken," where students ate chicken while watching *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood*.

On November 21st, the African Student Association hosted its annual talent show "Afropollo" in which a dance troupe from Loyola took home the prize. Then the very next day, Northwestern Community Ensemble (Northwestern's premier gospel choir) hosted their annual Fall Concert titled "Forever in Praise," during which they had everybody in Cahn Auditorium turnt as they "#jam(med)fordalamb."

So, while it is important to "stay woke" and stay on top of your work, it's also important to take care of yourself and be happy, especially in college. Thankfully, NU students have hosted several events from gospel concerts and artist showcases to plays and movie nights (and yes, our fair share of parties), and have proven that they have not forgotten the absolute vitality of black joy.



NCE belts some praise for Jesus at their fall concert

Syedah C. '17

State of the Black Union: Control Your Narrative

On November 18, 2015 For Members Only (NU's Black Student Alliance) hosted its annual State of The Black Union . This year we talked about controlling our narrative. Who better to talk to us about narrative and life than two powerful women in the media?

Mara Brock Akil (writer of *Girlfriends*, *Being Mary Jane*, and *Moesha*) and Amy DuBois Barnett (former editor-in-chief of *Ebony* and current exec editor at ESPN) spoke to students was about their journeys and things they have learned along the way as well as the importance of us owning our lives and our stories. Here are a few powerful thoughts from the evening:

"Own your life."

"You don't have to figure it out all at once."

"You have your own compass and a lot of times we talk ourselves out of it (what we know)."

"Don't let others put their fears on top of you."

"Get clear so you can hear your own voice."

"Positive images are just as damaging as negative ones."

"Writing positive images is vacant. There's no artistry in that."

We are not perfect. We are human."

"Humanity: the pendulum that swings between the polar opposites of negative and positive."



As you continue on your journey and each day take steps toward your future, remember that you are not in control of everything that happens to you but you control the choices you make and you are the writer of your experiences-- of your story. What story will you write?

Alexandria B. '16



Lipstick Theatre presents: For Colored Girls

who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf

Ntozake Shange brought this show to the masses: the women who lived this show, the women who loved this show, the women who *were* this show. At the time, there wasn't a forum for black women to express themselves through theatre—in the previous 250 years that theatre-makers found their livelihoods New York city, *A Raisin in The Sun* was the only Broadway show written by a black woman.

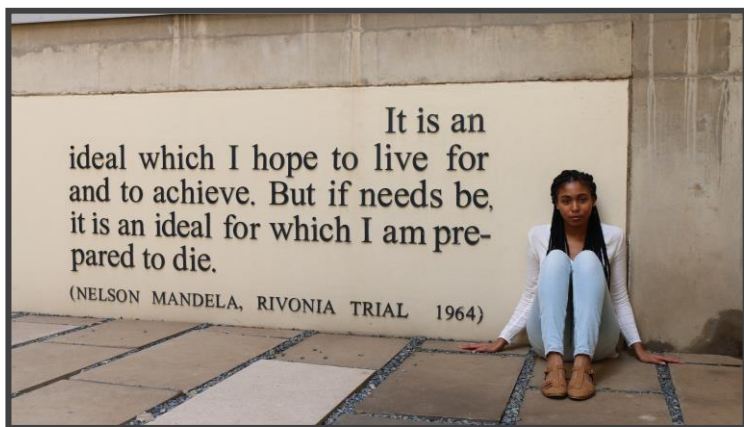
Shange changed the voice of American theatre to make it accessible to women who looked like me. She added rhythms that sounded like the way my grandmother spoke to my grandfather. She added music that sounded like the gospel choir at the church I went to as a kid. Shange added black joy along with black sadness, black struggle and black love—she added *black life* to theatre where it once was missing. She took Broadway, a place that was once a hub for minstrel shows, a place that ridiculed us, that subjugated us, that told us that we weren't wanted: and made it her own. She took words that were once used to oppress us—and re-colonized them until they felt like home. Her play is a radical redefinition of theatre: a redefinition of who could be in it, of who could make it, and of whom it was for.

Directing this show was one of the most fulfilling experiences that I've had at Northwestern and I am so thankful for it.

Joy H. '18

Looking at the experience behind the passport stamp:

A glimpse into life abroad



Taylor poses for a photo abroad



Camille, Joy and Allie, the *For Colored Girls* directors, enjoy a good laugh together

During my third year as a student at Northwestern I spent a quarter in Sevilla, Spain and a quarter in Johannesburg, South Africa. When I entered college I never considered traveling the world. But today, I cannot imagine who I would be without these experiences. Northwestern has so many resources and our study abroad programs are absolutely amazing. In college, you will have the opportunity to find yourself. Travelling allows you to understand who you are in a global context. It makes you consider how you want to impact the world. Taylor S. '16

A Q& A with our Homecoming Queen



Name: Iheoma Nkemere

Hometown: Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Major: Psychology Minor: Anthropology,
Global Health, IMC certificate

Q: What did it mean to you to be crowned queen?

A: Being crowned queen was exciting and a true honor. It made me proud to be supported by my peers and be able to represent the university

Q: Do you have any advice for students as they embark on the journey to college?

A: Trust yourself and make choices that align with what you need; choices you make that are good for you aren't necessarily the right choice for others. Find a space where you are challenged and supported by your peers to succeed.

Also have a good time because you're young, fun, and in college--the years truly fly quickly.

Q: Why did you choose NU?

A: I chose Northwestern mostly because it was an amazing school, far from home, with a great football team. Beyond that though it great place that offers unique experiences and allows students to explore in various fields of interest

Q: What is your favorite thing about NU?

A: Personally, the people I have met here in the past four years have been some of the most intelligent, passionate, and supportive individuals. They have helped me grow personally and widen my perspectives on the world and overall have been super fun. I have found a place in different communities across campus with each being unique yet welcoming at the same time.