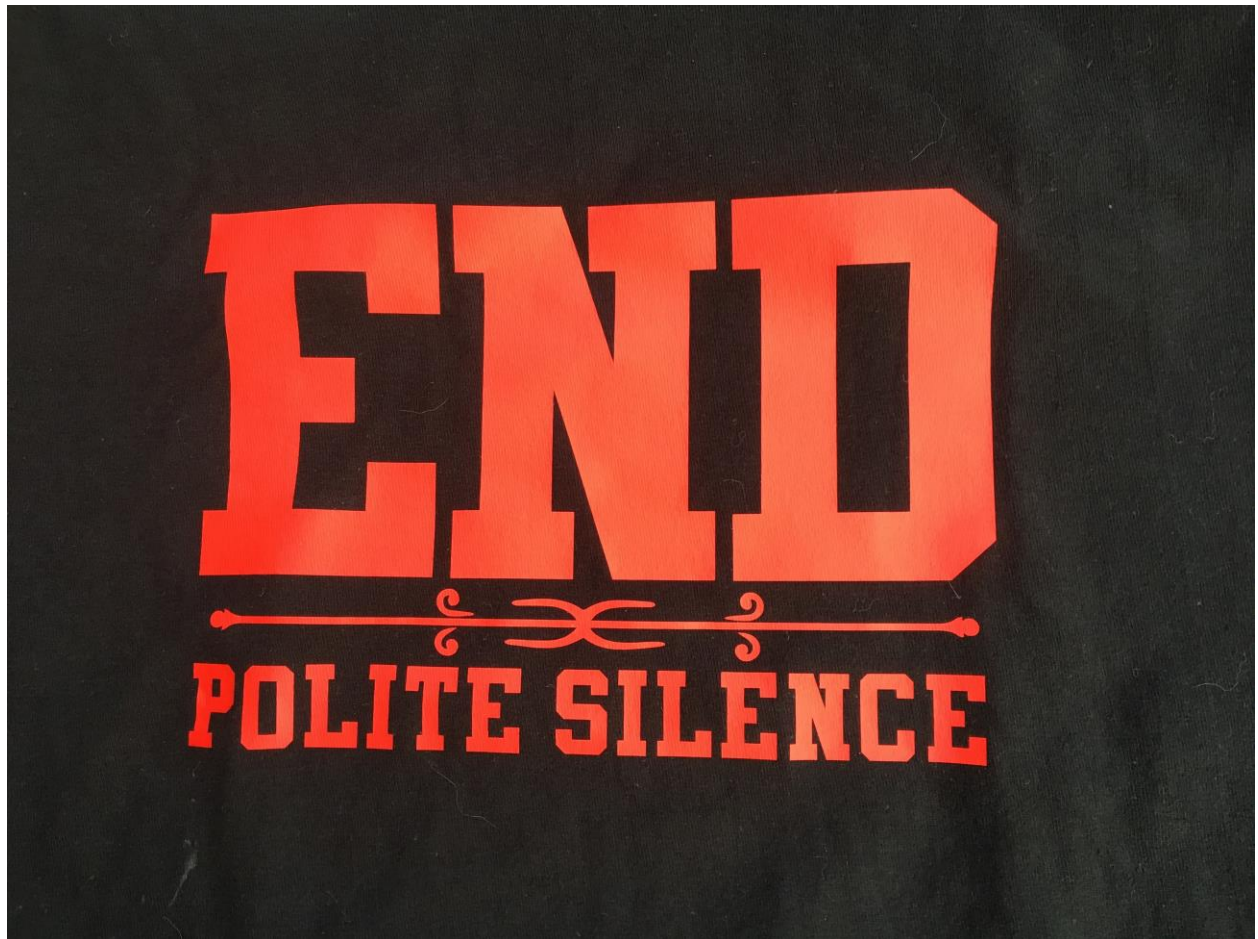




Coalition for Anti-Racist Action June 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Coalition for Anti-Racist Action (CARA) newsletter. This is the second newsletter and quarterly update on CARA activities, anti-racist activities on campus and events around the Greater Cincinnati community.

Sincerely,

CARA Newsletter Co-Editors Suzanne Buzek and Amy Koshoffer

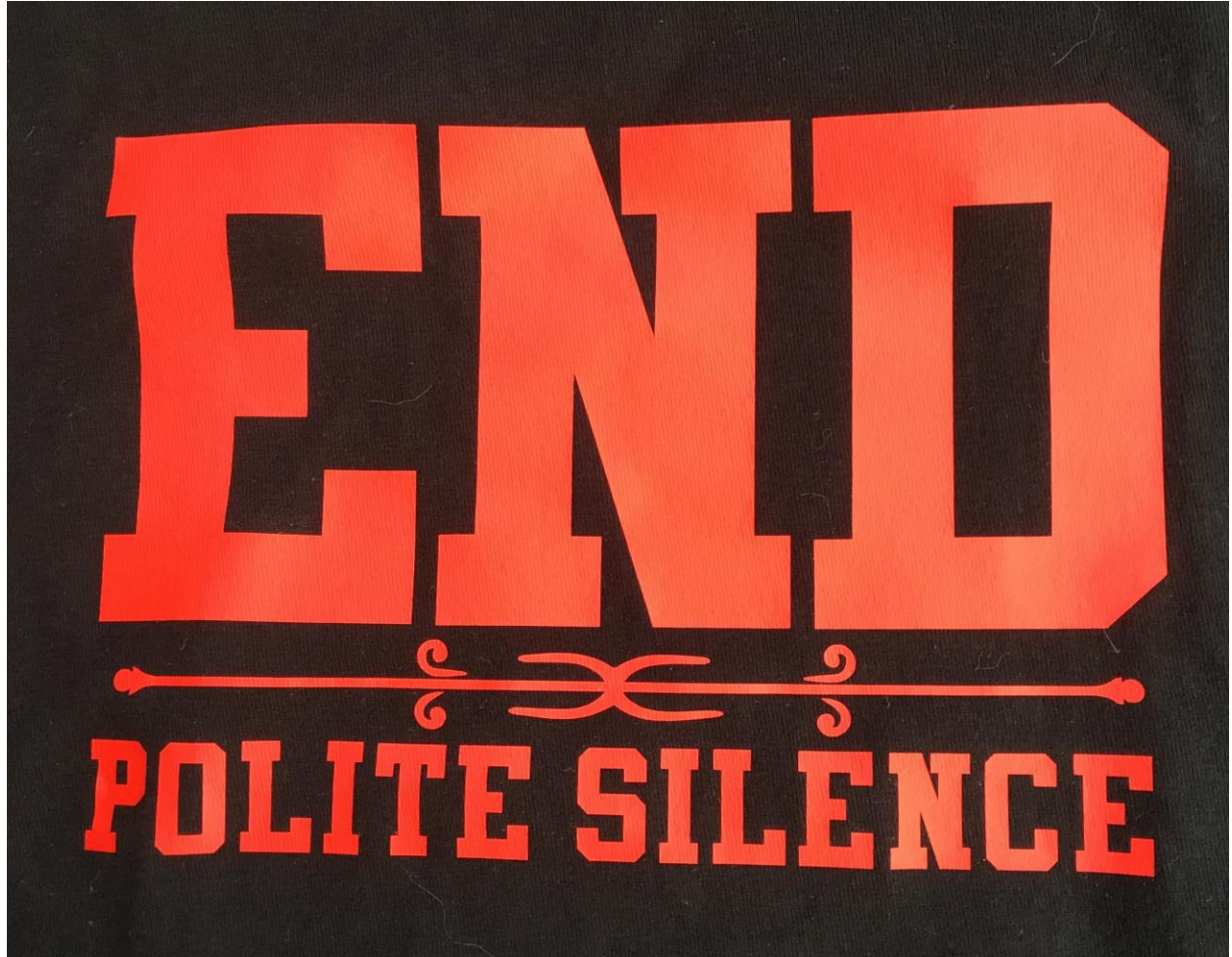
In This Issue



In this issue, readers will find an update from Co-Chair MK Lamkin, in-depth member reflections, and some calls to action:

- Co-Chair update and follow-up (added 2023-06-29)
- Race and Racism in Cincinnati docuseries
- 28 Days of Black Excellence
- Marian Spencer Awards
- Ohio August 8 Election
- Call for voter registration volunteers
- Call for Contributions

Message from Co-Chair MK Lamkin



MK Lamkin, CARA Co-Chair

When we were first organizing the Coalition back in 2020, an institutional leader said to me privately:

“In my experience, meaningful institutional change happens only when an agent of chaos is working in solidarity with an agent of peace. The Coalition seems like it could be...both.”

It’s a lot to wrap your mind around.

Perhaps we dabbled as an *agent of chaos* in the early days with the *Pledge to Dismantle White Supremacy within Ourselves and Our Institutions*. The pledge created **disorder and confusion, i.e., chaos**, by disrupting perceptions of individuals who had not considered their personal complicity in sustaining systemic racism at UC. Some chose to explore internalized white supremacy and embark on a personal journey of transformation. Others did not.

In year 2 (2021-22), Coalition leaders agreed that centering “*white supremacy within ourselves*” maybe wasn’t the best way to co-create a multi-racial coalition. So we changed it to a *Pledge to Organize for*

Racial Equity and organized meetings about how racism shows up at UC and how to address sources of racial inequity. In hindsight, it seems we were shifting into *agents of peace*.

During our summer leadership retreat in May 2022, we agreed that year 3 (2022-23) would center “more noise, fewer meetings”. The *Agent of Chaos* was back, baby! But efforts to make noise fell short. [See the Coalition’s 2022-23 Summary Report for context](#).

Students, however: their work was masterful. [UC Ambition’s statements on Instagram](#) led to the Public Apology for Racism in the College of Nursing, and [Enough is Enough UC](#) reminded everyone that racist ideas and behaviors are experienced across academic spaces. While the students were making noise, the Coalition missed an important opportunity to amplify these students’ voices and pressure administrators.

Now we have new opportunities.

A new petition is circulating: [Petition for Racially Just Leadership for the UC College of Nursing](#). I encourage you to read it carefully and consider signing it. While I intend to sign it, I have not done so yet. I support the call to action intellectually, but I’ve yet to reconcile my desire for harmony with the implications of supporting their demands. They call for the removal of 3 administrative leaders, including a Coalition member I care about and with whom I have a mutually supportive working relationship.

In the coming weeks, Trent and I will be meeting with Coalition leaders and consultants to discuss our collective response. Through this process, I will be interrogating who I am as leader including when and how to be effective as an *agent of chaos*, *agent of peace*, or both.

I ask the same of you. Where do you stand on the matter? What are you willing to say, do, or sacrifice to support what is right?

The discussion continues at the End Polite Silence event in September (check Outlook for your calendar invite). See you there.

2023-06-29 Follow-up Message from Co-Chair MK

I have the utmost respect and appreciation for people willing to call me in. Yesterday, after reading the newsletter, deeply valued members invited me in for conversation about my message, especially the way in which I introduced the petition for [Racially Just Leadership in the College of Nursing](#). The dialogue helped me realize that by centering my personal struggle in the message, I directed attention away from the student struggle. Further, I used language that implied students wrote the petition, when in fact it could be anyone with intimate knowledge of the ways in which students in the College of Nursing experience systemic and interpersonal racism.

Here I wish to direct attention where attention is deserved: to the students. What we learn from the petition is that Black students in nursing continue to suffer a hostile learning environment and that administrators continue to dismiss them. While Interim Dean Gillespie's [January 2023 public apology](#) for racism in nursing was a great first step toward racial healing, what follows is what matters most. This petition indicates that since the apology, racial healing has not been pursued further.

The Coalition identifies as a “campus-wide network of staff and faculty who support calls to action by Black-led organizations,” and here we have a call to action.

While the immediate call is for individuals to sign a petition, the action needed for meaningful change goes beyond signing. As indicated in my original message, Trent and I will be meeting with Coalition consultants and leaders in the next couple of weeks to develop a framework for supporting the call to action more broadly.

In the meantime, I encourage you to read the petition, discuss the petition, consider signing the petition, and encourage others to do the same. If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to Trent or me.

Race and Racism in Cincinnati docuseries reflection



Keith Lanser, Center for Community Engagement

At the final screening of the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center's *Race and Racism in Cincinnati* docuseries, UC students took a deep dive into **how racism presents itself in Cincinnati today**. Like the first two film screenings, students had the opportunity to learn about topics like police violence and gentrification "from the racial margins"; they heard stories not often told in local schools or in mainstream (white) culture. Two things that really stuck out to me from our discussion after the third film.

First, students seemed dismayed to learn about **how the University of Cincinnati has contributed to police violence**. They learned about Everette Howard, an unarmed, Black Upward Bound student who was fatally tased by a University of Cincinnati police officer in 2011 following a fight in Turner Hall. We heard about how the University's police department stopped using tasers in 2011 after Everette died, and how tasers were then re-introduced in 2017. Students learned about Sam DuBose, an unarmed Black man who was fatally shot by a University of Cincinnati police officer in 2015 during a traffic stop. We also heard about how UC paid almost \$5 million to the DuBose family in 2016, and how UC was then forced to award almost \$350,000 to Sam's killer due to his "unfair dismissal" from UC in 2018. The film did not cover Lorenzo Collins' killing (he was shot and killed by UC police in 1997) or Kelly Brinson's killing (he was killed by UC police while at University hospital in 2010). The students seemed upset after learning that their university's police force, a force that is meant to serve and protect the campus

community, was responsible for the death of so many unarmed Black men. They realized the problem isn't something that happens "out there". The problem is something that is happening right here.

Second, our conversation about race and racism in Cincinnati then led to an **interesting and timely discussion about [Ohio Senate Bill 83](#)**. Here we were, having an important conversation about race and racism in Cincinnati, when students suddenly realized—wow—this sort of conversation may soon be illegal. Among other things, SB 83 would prohibit faculty and staff at all higher education institutions in Ohio from commenting on "the public policy controversies of the day". How are students supposed to grapple with society's greatest challenges when their faculty and staff are prohibited from facilitating conversations on supposedly "controversial" topics like police brutality or climate change? What happened to free speech and to intellectual freedom? Students talked about how uncomfortable this bill made them feel, and how laws like this make them want to leave Ohio. We ended our conversation by talking about [how to reach out to our state representatives](#) and how to provide feedback on SB 83 [via UC's website](#).

What tough conversations are you having with students before it becomes illegal?

28 Days of Black Excellence



Amy Koschoffer, UC Libraries

This year was the inaugural offering of 28 Days of Black Excellence. Dr. Holly McGee, Associate Professor, Department of Africana Studies curated an amazing [calendar of events](#) for every day (not just the work days) of Black History Month.

The month covered four major themes The Future of Black History Parts I and II, Food and Foodways, Arts, Entertainment, and Entrepreneurialism, and Health and Wellness. And by the end of the month, we answered the question of “Do we still need Black History Month” with a resounding yes. There was so much to learn and to understand about how our modern American Society functions due to the impact of the descendants of enslaved people and the policies and practices of the majority white leadership throughout our history. Truly comprehending what happened in our past, what institutions were built on these inequalities, and what structures continue to operate in our society will help us heal our country and prepare us all to be better citizens of our country.

I had the opportunity to attend two events in the month. The first, co-sponsored by the **library RESPECT committee, was a Lunch and Learn with the author of *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*** (University of Illinois Press, 2016) Sowande’ Mustakeem. The lunch and learn focused on how Dr. Mustakeem used her text to create a course for students to address issues not often discussed in other courses about enslaved peoples’ journey from Africa to the US (United States) through the Middle Passage. The book is a tough lesson in how these stolen people were not seen as human but as commodities. It focused deeply on the diseases that infected the people on the ship as well as the harsh medical approaches to overcome these diseases and the exploitive disregard for the enslaved persons’ experience and humanity. Dr. Mustakeem was an amazingly engaging speaker and challenged everyone present to take their understanding to a deeper level and see how these themes still play out in modern medical practice.

The second event I attended was the **closing town hall with Dr. Valencia Moses, Learning Facilitator at Cincinnati State**, who guided attendees in a conversation to help us capitalize on the energy of Black History Month 2023 throughout the year. The conversation was entitled “**Staying in THIS Powerful Place**”. It was a wonderful meditative discussion about what people had experienced in the prior 27 days and what they needed to keep in mind to maintain this higher awareness derived from the experiences of the month. It also focused on setting boundaries and practicing self-care for individuals deeply engaged in the work to combat racism. After the talk, attendees could make audio messages to be shared beyond the event through Urbanist Media’s special podcast for Urban Roots and make video clips to be shared on social media. The UC Coalition for Anti-Racist Action, and the Center for Truth, Healing, and Racial Transformation held guided conversation circles on how the entire Bearcat community could work together to normalize true equity on our campus. The coalition provided post-it notes to gather comments from these circles and will review them to consider future actions. Dr. Valencia Moses was a true delight and brought the needed closure to the month. Also Dr. McGee was on hand to also offer some closing remarks. Many kudos to Dr. McGee for her outstanding effort on the month’s program and the greater impact this event will have.

For details on the other events in the month, you can visit the Bearcats Landing page for the event [UC’s Black History Month web page](#).



Marian Spencer Awards Reflection



June Taylor-Slaughter, UC Libraries

For the year to be 2020 none of us saw it coming. Perfect vision was far from view. By March, fear of the deadly Corona Virus spread throughout Cincinnati, so we left UC for what we thought would be a couple of weeks. Weeks turned into months, then.... indefinitely. Since I was unable to perform my usual responsibilities working from home, I decided to pursue my passion and create DEI training modules for the students that worked in the Sciences & Engineering Libraries. Every morning I'd begin work while greeting two of my colleagues on Teams. The day after Memorial Day it was all over the news. Although it surprised me—it didn't. A police officer killed another unarmed black man. We talked on Teams, with tears in my eyes as I told them both, "It doesn't matter. Nothing will be done about it". My two colleagues, both white just listened. I continued, "They saw a little 12-old black boy, Tamir Rice get shot by the police within 2 seconds of them arriving for playing with a toy gun. They saw the video of John Crawford with a toy gun on his phone shot dead within seconds by the police in Walmart. He never knew what happened. Nothing was done! These happened in Ohio—an open carry state. Why would this be any different?" My colleague, Mikaila Corday replied, "Yes, it will, June! I can feel it!" She

couldn't see me, but I was rolling my eyes up in my head and thinking, "Whatever!" She said it so many times that day that I almost started believing her.

She was right! Whether it would be a moment or a movement we couldn't tell, but this was the beginning of something and hopefully the end of something else. There was an awakening of blinded eyes across America. We continued working at home with uncertainty about some things with a new hope for others. I continued my work over the year expanding my DEI training project to all 10 UC Libraries. At UC Libraries, we realized that we had a moral obligation to use our resources in our new wokeness. A committee was formed, and I was privileged to be one of the first co-chairs of UC Libraries' RESPECT (Racial Equity Support & Programming to Educate the Community Team). We commenced with an online program on the first US national holiday for Juneteenth, followed by a 19-Day Challenge Against Systemic Racism. I was so very humbled when I, June Taylor-Slaughter, Research Services Program Manager at UC Libraries was proud to be honored as the staff recipient of the 2021 Marian Spencer Equity Ambassador Award.

From the very first Equity and Inclusion Conference at UC me, Mikaila Corday and a few other colleagues always tried to attend every year. When DEI was new if there was a workshop, we were there. We were hungry to learn more, to be more, to ultimately do more. Now years later, DEI and Anti-Racism are the new buzz words. After joining CARA, Mikaila created a Libguide (curated website) in the UC Libraries website to house CARA's information. That was only the beginning... Mikaila dedicated so much of her time after work every day creating a website for DEI and Anti-Racism that covers everything imaginable. I know because if she wasn't consulting me about issues, I was consulting her about problems. She has done an extraordinary job creating this website that's been so resourceful that it's been viewed from all over the U.S. I was absolutely thrilled when Mikaila Corday, Serials Cataloger at UC Libraries, my ally, my advocate and my friend was named the staff recipient of the 2022 Marian Spencer Equity Ambassador Award.

While some of us were traumatized by the death of George Floyd, one of my colleagues was mourning the loss of her brother. Tiffany Grant's brother succumbed to COVID-19 a few weeks prior. He was one of many victims of disparities from racial discrimination and neglect in healthcare during the pandemic. For this reason, Tiffany devoted her research interest to the intersection of health disparities and health/racial equity through research data with a variety of programs, and various projects at UC and throughout Cincinnati. She served as the lead for "Closing the Health Gap in Cincinnati", a health outreach project designed to reduce health disparities and promote health literacy in the West End. Tiffany is also the Co-Advisor for Cincy SACNAS and a Diversity Advocate for the Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine Program. Finally, she is currently the co-chair of UC Libraries RESPECT (Racial Equity Support & Programming to Educate the Community Team). Under her leadership RESPECT has sponsored a "Lunch and Learn" with Dr. Sowande' M. Mustakeem, author of "Slavery at Sea" and planning a 21-Day Challenge Against Systemic Racism this summer. Tiffany says that her North Star is the DEI work that she does in memory of her brother. In my book, she is a true star! That's why I wasn't at all surprised when my phenomenal colleague, Dr. Tiffany Grant, Assistant Director for Research & Informatics at UC Libraries was named the faculty recipient of the 2023 Marian Spencer Equity Ambassador Award.

Marian Spencer left a legacy that none of us can measure up to, but we're indeed honored to stand on her shoulders. We strive to set a standard at UC Libraries to continue with intentionality, not to be rewarded, but to make a difference. not for recognition but on purpose to educate and bring empathy and understanding to those who need to be enlightened.

Ohio August 8 Election

Kyle Key, University Honors Program

Ohio is holding an uncommon election on August 8 in which voters will decide whether the state should require 60% of voters to enact new constitutional amendments, instead of the current simple majority of 50% plus one.

[Read more from the Cincinnati Enquirer for important dates and information.](#)

Fall Voter Registration



Keith Lanser, Center for Community Engagement

Hi everyone! I'm looking for UC staff/ faculty/ students to sign up to register students to vote during our on-campus orientations this summer. Last summer we registered almost 500 students to vote at summer orientations! We couldn't have done that without the support of dozens of volunteers just like you. Our plan is to have at least 1 trained UC representative (student, faculty, or staff) working alongside 1-2 volunteers from the League of Women Voters at each orientation.

If you are interested in helping out with voter registration this summer, please follow the steps below to get started:

- ## Call for Contributions



Please consider making a contribution to the newsletter. It can be a reflection from an event you attend or an update on anti-racist work or initiatives you are part of. Our next issue is tentatively scheduled for release in fall 2023.

Send your contributions to CincyCARA.information@gmail.com.