



UC Coalition for Anti-Racist Action

September 2023 Newsletter

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CARA Hosts 2nd End Polite Silence™ Day

End Polite Silence Day 2023

- Monday, September 18
- 2-4 p.m.
- In-Person: Faculty Enrichment Center on UC Clifton Campus | Location TBD on UC Blue Ash Campus
- Virtual: Zoom
- Check Outlook for your calendar invite.

On September 18, 2013, two treasured friends and colleagues, Carol Tonge Mack and Ronald Jackson III, were the targets of a hostile racist cartoon. They arrived at work to discover it circulated on paper and electronically. If you were here, surely you remember it. But do you remember what you said? Or did not say?

Most of us in the white majority said nothing.

As part of her healing journey not only from the racist attack but also the polite silence that followed, Carol began a movement to End Polite Silence™. It aims to encourage others to speak up when an injustice of any kind has occurred.

But, one CARA member asked last year, “How do you End Polite Silence *strategically?*” Such a great question! Please join us at this event to:

- Connect with fellow members.

- Explore ways to End Polite Silence *strategically* on specific cases.
- Take action.

UC Blue Ash Coalition Members: *The location for UC Blue Ash is still being determined. Please stay in touch with Brenda Refaei.*

We hope to see you there!

Get Ready to Renew Your Commitments

2023-24 Pledge Coming Soon

CARA was founded in 2020 by the first 20 staff and faculty who signed a “Pledge to Dismantle White Supremacy Within Ourselves and Our Institutions.” Since then, joining the Coalition (aka CARA) has involved signing a pledge. So far, 265+ colleagues have signed. Each summer, the pledge from the previous year is revisited, revised, and recirculated. In 2021, it was revised into a “Pledge to Organize for Racial Equity.” The new language intended to center the solution versus the problem. While that language held for 2 years, this year we wondered whether that language was substantially direct.

This year, the pledge is inspired by decades-long calls to action, more recent calls we have received, and desire to redirect to the root of the problem. This year, we ask members to **Pledge to Challenge White Supremacy within Your Sphere of Influence**. Be on the lookout: it is coming soon to an inbox near you.

Co-Chair Election Coming Soon

The Coalition has been led by Co-Chairs MK Lamkin and Trent Pinto since 2020. Both have encouraged others to consider serving in these roles, but until now, no one has expressed interest. Keith Lanser, Assistant Director for UC’s Center for Community Engagement, would like to be considered for the Staff Co-Chair position. We will circulate a vote of confidence for Keith and MK in the coming weeks.

Co-Chair Comments: MK Lamkin

Have you been following the organizing and activism happening in the College of Nursing?

In fall 2022, students affiliated with the organization UC Ambition began posting their experiences with racism in the college [on Instagram](#). Interim Dean of the College of Nursing, Dr. Gordan Gillespie, engaged and agreed to a public apology (January 2023) as a first step toward racial healing. Several Coalition members attended the public apology and shared reflections in the [February CARA newsletter](#). Additional meetings ensued, but the process seems to have broken down.

In May 2023, an anonymous “Nurse Justice” began circulating a [Petition for Racially Just Leadership in the UC College of Nursing](#).

In the Petition, Nurse Justice describes a traumatizing learning environment for Black students and unsupportive responses from 3 top administrators. The petition does not call for these administrative

leaders to do better. Rather, it calls for new leaders. The call tells me that the individuals Nurse Justice represents are exhausted and in dire need of outside support.

I signed the petition not because I believe the removal of these leaders will result in racially just leadership.

I signed because I believe Nurse Justice, and I empathize with the people Nurse Justice represents.

I signed because I believe racial healing and transformation are possible in the College of Nursing, but not without the confidence and collaboration of Black scholar-activists.

Can current leaders be the new leaders Nurse Justice calls for? Theoretically, yes, but will they? Time will tell, and in the meantime, **I stand with Nurse Justice.**

Where do you stand?

Co-Chair Comments: Trent Pinto

I'm not a big believer in coincidences. I believe that most of the events in our personal lives happen for a reason. When you're able to step back from an experience and piece together the various conditions that were met in order to make that experience possible, you realize much of the pathway that was placed before you. Unknowingly you may have been marching such a path unaware of your surroundings or whom you were coming into contact with. It is only upon looking in the rearview mirror do you recognize that *maybe* all of those steps were meant to happen to get you to that particular place, at that particular time.

I sit here writing these notes thinking back 4 years to when I first met MK through our mutual friend and colleague, Kim Fulbright. Kim and I had been leading white-identified caucus spaces for student affairs colleagues for a short period of time and she mentioned that we should get coffee at some point and meet another colleague of hers who was interested in doing similar work. Our first interactions were around challenging one another to grapple with the workbook "Me and White Supremacy" (Saad, 2018), and to discuss ways in which we could push for racial justice within our own spheres of influence. These passionate conversations led to questions around our roles and influence here at UC. The national narrative around racial justice was palatable, and our own campus community was reeling from the murder of Sam DuBose in 2015. *Something* had to be done, but *what* could we possibly do?

It is now 2023 and the past four years working with, and learning from, my dear friend and colleague MK Lamkin have been life-altering. I did not realize in 2019 the pathway that would be set before me, and never did I imagine that simply saying "yes" to a workbook group meeting would lead to my participation as co-chair of something as big and important as CARA. Under MK's vision, unwavering passion, and leadership, CARA has reached hundreds of colleagues at UC and beyond; people I otherwise would have never had the pleasure of getting to know or walk alongside if it were not for this organization. My friends and colleagues are too numerous to attempt to name here in this reflection, but every one of you has been on that journey for me that has had purpose and meaning, even if I did not realize it at the beginning.

MK and I have discussed our roles as co-chairs of this organization and have been seeking opportunities for colleagues to step into the roles in order to bring about fresh perspectives and energy to the work. I am delighted that Keith Lanser has expressed interest and could not be more thrilled to throw my support behind him as the staff co-chair moving forward. I continue to encourage faculty colleagues to consider as well, as this type of work is made a bit lighter when we are all carrying a little portion of it.

As I step away from this role, I am reminded of the countless hours of conversation I have had with colleagues. Conversations with colleagues struggling to see their role in *the movement* or struggling to see how they can make a difference in their unit, their department, or even their family. One thing we can all agree upon is that just showing up, just recognizing the injustices that privilege has clouded or previously shadowed you from; simply releasing your own naivete and *being present* to one another, is a major step towards understanding your role in this movement. To all my colleagues in CARA, thank you. Thank you for entrusting the organization, and to me as staff co-chair, with this type of responsibility. Thank you for giving power and voice to those looking for our support.

I'm not going anywhere. I plan on continuing to participate in CARA events, show up at meetings and retreats, and help out in any way that I can. I love this organization and the roots that have been planted by MK and its leaders throughout the past few years. I cannot wait to see how this movement continues to grow and thrive. I cannot wait to continue to have late afternoon conversations with MK on the phone "scheming and plotting" on how we can continue to push our narrative of racial justice forward together. While walking at the front of this organization down this pathway is no longer my role, trust that I will be right beside each and every one of you as I cannot imagine any minutes of my life here at UC without the presence of CARA continuing to guide this journey, wherever that pathway may lead.

Co-Chair Candidate Comments: Keith Lanser

Greetings! I'm Keith Lanser (he/him/his), assistant director of the Center for Community Engagement. This academic year, I've volunteered to serve as co-chair of CARA. My goals for this year are twofold:

1. To motivate you to do what you can to end white supremacy at UC.
2. To provide you opportunities for action. If not now, when?

Dr. Martin Luther King [visited Oberlin College](#) for the second time in October of 1964. It was his second public appearance after being recognized with a Nobel Peace Prize. This was a significant time in the struggle for civil rights. There were riots in at least six cities across the United States, and three civil rights workers had just been murdered by white supremacists in Mississippi. "The time is always right to do what's right," he told the audience. "It is true that behavior cannot be legislated, and legislation cannot make you love me, but legislation can restrain you from lynching me, and I think that is kind of important," he exclaimed.

While this speech was delivered almost 60 years ago, the message continues to resonate today. It is still always right to do what's right. But doing what's right isn't easy. I encourage you to incorporate the principles of Kingian nonviolence within your anti-racism work at UC. At the core of Kingian nonviolence are six principles:

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. Nonviolent action will challenge you physically, spiritually, and emotionally. If your anti-racism work comes from a place of convenience or comfortability, you are probably doing it wrong.
2. The Beloved Community is the framework of the future. [In Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community](#), all people share in the wealth of the world. Poverty, hunger, and homelessness are viewed as unacceptable; human decency does not allow it. In the Beloved Community, everyone has the chance to reach their full potential.
3. Attack forces of evil, not the people doing evil. Klansmen do not leave the KKK after being attacked and isolated. They leave the KKK after building relationships with people who defy their racist stereotypes. Daryl Davis, a blues musician, [has befriended over 200 Klansmen who have since given up their robes](#). Once their friendship develops, they realize that their hate might be erroneous.
4. Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal. You will not get a pat on the back for your anti-racism work. You may get punished. You may even be physically threatened. But two wrongs do not make a right. Your suffering communicates the importance of the work to both your friends and those who wish you harm. According to the King Center, [Dr. King went to jail 29 times for acts of civil disobedience](#). His suffering galvanized the public.
5. Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence. Nonviolence requires us to love others *and* ourselves, even when it is difficult. [Self-care is an essential component to nonviolence resistance](#). Burnout and compassion fatigue are real and can have damaging consequences for your mental and physical health.
6. The universe is on the side of justice. Kingian nonviolence asks us to believe that justice will prevail in the end. Nonviolence is both the means and the ends. "[We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.](#)"

I encourage you to identify how you will incorporate Kingian nonviolence into your anti-racism work at UC, knowing that it will be hard and uncomfortable. What will you do within your sphere of influence to dismantle white supremacy at UC? Will you:

- Believe students when they say that they are experiencing racism in the classroom?
- [Sign students' petitions](#) when they express a desire for change at UC?
- [Register your students to vote](#), and encourage them to vote in November?
- [Believe faculty and staff](#) when they say they are [experiencing racism in the workplace](#)?
- Speak less so faculty and staff of color can express themselves in meetings?
- [Call other faculty and staff in](#) when they perpetuate white supremacy?
- Apologize and take ownership of your actions when you get called in?
- Hire faculty and staff of color?
- Acknowledge the ways in which the institution [has contributed to white supremacy](#)?

- Demand that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging be intentionally incorporated within your department's strategic plans?
- Lead or participate in an anti-racism book club within your department?
- Take the [Intercultural Development Inventory](#) and commit to working on an Intercultural Development Plan this academic year for your own professional development?
- [Attend community workshops and events](#) to learn more about systemic racism in Greater Cincinnati?

To help you to answer this call to action, I will periodically post opportunities for anti-racist action within our CARA Teams page, and I hope you do so as well.

Don't wait for Superman to come and solve all our problems. He isn't coming. Ending white supremacy at UC is the responsibility of each one of us. The time for action is right now, and the path forward is Kingian nonviolent action.

Call for Contributions



Suzanne Buzek and Amy Koshoffer, CARA Newsletter Editors

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 later in fall 2023.

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