



UC Coalition for Anti-Racist Action April 2024 Newsletter

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Co-Chair Comments: MK Lamkin

My name is MK and I've been co-leading the UC's Coalition for Anti-Racist Action (CARA) since its inception in 2020. My main role at UC involves leading and supporting Undergraduate Research programs. I was raised academically in STEM spaces, where we were nearly all white and never talked about it. In my current role, I pursued learning to better understand this thing we call underrepresentation. My learning clarified how systemic racism works in higher education and how it hurts people. This understanding stirred a deep desire to do something. In 2020, it seemed like everyone was onboard.

Four years later, everyone is more cautious. Supreme court rulings and state legislation are making it increasingly risky to name systemic racism and white supremacy as driving forces of on-going racial disparities. So where do we go from here?

It's hard to say, but we won't go anywhere without allyship across ranks, roles, and identity groups. In response to the need for greater allyship, CARA member June Taylor-Slaughter (UC Libraries) and I are partnering to provide the [Racial Healing and Authentic Allyship Program for Emerging Leaders](#). We are doing this in collaboration with UC's Center for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation; the UC Libraries RESPECT Committee; and Joe Minarak, a Social Work professor with 30+ years of experience facilitating dialogue on race and racism.

If you are interested in developing allyship and exploring potential for healing and transformation, visit the [Racial Healing and Authentic Allyship Program Web Page](#) to learn more, see the full schedule, and apply.

[Submit your application](#) by July 26, 2024, to be considered. Participants will be selected based in interest and experience.

Recognizing Co-Chair Keith Lanser

CARA co-founders are committed to staff and faculty co-leadership. After 3 years as Staff Co-Chair, Trent Pinto (Resident Education and Development) stepped away and Keith Lanser (Center for Community Engagement) stepped in. Keith brought perspective as a social change educator and advocate for democratic engagement. He had proximity to student voice through his leadership of UC's Racial Awareness Program and UC Votes.

MK especially appreciated the clarity and conviction he brought to the table.

"When I was in the weeds with Pledge language, Keith's suggestion to 'just say challenge white supremacy within my sphere of influence' hit like a beam of sunshine," they said. "When I was frustrated over low turnout at our End Polite Silence event, Keith advised that I 'focus on the people who were there.' A better point could not have been made."

In fall 2023, Keith facilitated dialogue and healing for members who were hurt or angered by MK's email encouraging participation at a rally for Palestine. In that moment, Keith showed adaptability and versatility as well as conviction and clarity. Whether Keith is leading, facilitating, providing insight and guidance, or contributing to written work, he approaches the task in the spirit of unity and purpose. As Co-Chair, he helped ensure the Coalition will continue to grow its capacity to challenge white supremacy at UC, and for that we are grateful.

Interested in Co-Leading the Coalition?

The staff Co-Chair position will be open as Keith Lanser transitions out to focus on the upcoming election season. MK remains open to ceding the faculty Co-Chair position. If anyone is interested in either of these roles, please reach out to MK, Keith, or Amy Koshoffer.

Co-Chair Comments: Keith Lanser

It is never OK for white UC employees to use the full n-word.

Since 2020, leaders in CARA have been made aware of at least six examples of white UC employees using the full n-word in front of other Bearcats. One of these incidents I personally witnessed in my first six months of working at UC. It is reasonable to assume that there have been additional incidents of this happening, which we were not made aware of. It appears that there is a clear need for us to do some educating on this topic. So, let's talk about it.

[According to author-activist Ta-Nehisi Coates](#), "words don't have meaning without context". If your romantic partner were to refer to you as "babe", you would probably feel comfortable with that, because you are in a trusting, loving relationship with this person. The context makes sense. But if you were walking down the street, and if a random person were to call you "babe", you probably would feel extremely uncomfortable. You don't know that person. Why are they calling you "babe"? The context does not make sense. The person saying the words matter.

Moreover, we need to recognize that it is acceptable for historically marginalized groups to use derogatory words that have been historically used against them. For some, it can be a way to take back the narrative and take ownership of their plight. For example, it isn't abnormal to hear groups of women refer to themselves using the b-word. Women have been ridiculed and humiliated by men using this word for a very, very long time. For many women, using the b-word with other women can be a way to take back their power and make light of the misogyny that they have experienced over time. The context makes sense. However, there will never be an appropriate context for me, as a cisgender man, to refer to a woman using the b-word. To do so would be condescending and cruel.

Similarly, there is never an appropriate context for a white person to ever use the full n-word. In the United States, the n-word has been used by white people to dehumanize Black people and to maintain white supremacy for centuries. White people saying the full n-word is always condescending and cruel.

This also applies to educational settings. The n-word is an extremely damaging word that causes an immense amount of pain for many of our students and colleagues of color. Hearing that word come out

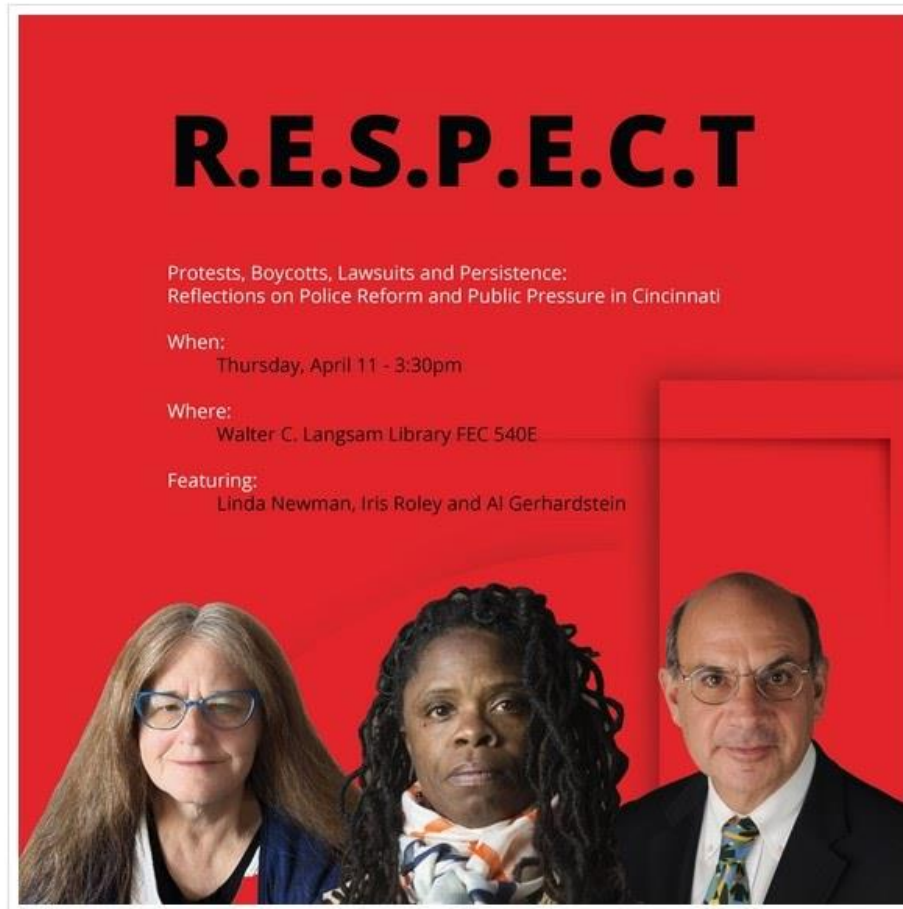
of a white faculty or staff member's mouth can literally be traumatizing. Why would you want to say something that you know could hurt or traumatize one of your students or one of your colleagues? If you are interested in creating an equitable and safe learning environment for students of color, and if you value working in an equitable and safe workplace, then you should never use the full-n word in an educational setting.

I would argue, like Coates, that not saying the n-word gives white people a very tiny glimpse of what it is like to be Black in this country. According to him, "to be Black in this country is to walk through the world and watch people doing things that you cannot do." I have never worried about being pulled over because of the color of my skin. I don't worry about jogging in the "wrong neighborhood". When I go shopping, I never worry about being followed or harassed by security staff. Not saying the n-word is one of the simplest ways for white people to demonstrate empathy for the lived experiences of millions of Black Americans.

To summarize, it is never appropriate for white faculty and staff to use the full n-word in front of other Bearcats because the context is never appropriate and saying the n-word can cause your students and other faculty and staff serious harm. By refraining from saying that word, you can demonstrate empathy for what Black people have gone through and continue to experience in our society today.

Protest, Boycotts, Lawsuits, and Persistence: Reflections on Police Reform and Public Pressure in Cincinnati

DETAILS: Thursday, April 11, 3:30pm, Walter C. Langsam Library FEC 540E – with remarks by Linda Newman, Iris Roley and Al Gerhardstein.



Nimisha Bhat, Assistant Librarian - History, Anthropology, WGSS

UC Library's RESPECT (Racial Equity Supporting Programming to Educate the Community Team) Committee hosted prominent civil rights leaders from the Cincinnati community on Thursday, April 11 to describe their monumental efforts to enact change for the city. Al Gerhardstein, [prominent civil rights attorney whose papers are housed at the UC Archives](#), [Iris Roley, Program Director of Cincinnati Black United Front](#), and Linda Newman, leader in the Coalition for a Just Cincinnati spoke about the period of Cincinnati history, police brutality, and murder & marginalization of Black people catalyzed by the years 2000-2002. In response to this, the Black United Front was formed and worked to register Black stories of racial profiling by police to build a class-action lawsuit. The speakers explained how their work became connected to one another, and that along with other community partners, like business owners and other grassroots organizations like Coalition for a Just Cincinnati, Black United Front was able to confront the city of Cincinnati through actions like the Cincinnati Music Festival boycott. With the power of the community and the law, through the help of Gerhardstein, Roley and Newman detailed their work

on pushing for change through efforts like the Collaborative Agreement, which centers the community in the design and implementation of what public safety should look like.

The session was a powerful one, describing the strong backlash activists received from the city and the media, the toll that the work of organizing takes, and the slow movement of change. But ultimately Gerhardstein, Roley, and Newman spoke of hope, and the never-ending hope that one must have to pursue this work. The Collaborative Agreement has enacted sweeping reforms and has been cited as a national model in the twenty years since its creation, and the speakers highlighted that the work to prevent violence and keep communities safe is never over and will continue on.

Douglass Day 2024



Amy Koshoffer, Assistant Director, Research and Data Services, UC Libraries

[Frederick Douglass](#) was known for his exceptional skills as an orator and his influential writings as well as being an abolitionist, social reformer and statesman. But he did not know the year or date of the day he was born. So he chose February 14 as the day of his birth.

In honor of this choice and the contributions Douglass made, we celebrate [Douglass Day](#) every February 14 and in many ways. Beautiful birthday cakes and performances of his works happen across the nation, as well as events involving the transcription of his written works. These transcription events are sponsored by a collaborative group including The Center for Black Digital Research at Penn State and the

Library of Congress. UC participated in the transcript-a-thon for the past few years, most recently on February 14, 2024, in Langsam Library.

This year's event received a UC Libraries [RESPECT grant](#) to cover food from Just Q'in BBQ and copies of a book of Douglass's works for volunteers. More than twenty volunteers from across the campus joined team leaders RJ Boutelle (English A&S) and Charity Winburn (Associate Director McNair Scholarship Program) for a day of transcribing Frederick Douglass' letters to family members, members of the military, statesman and other prominent people of the day. The event also streamed activities at partner institutions such as live readings and a cake contest.

To do the transcription, a volunteer would select one of the documents marked either for transcription or review of completed transcription.

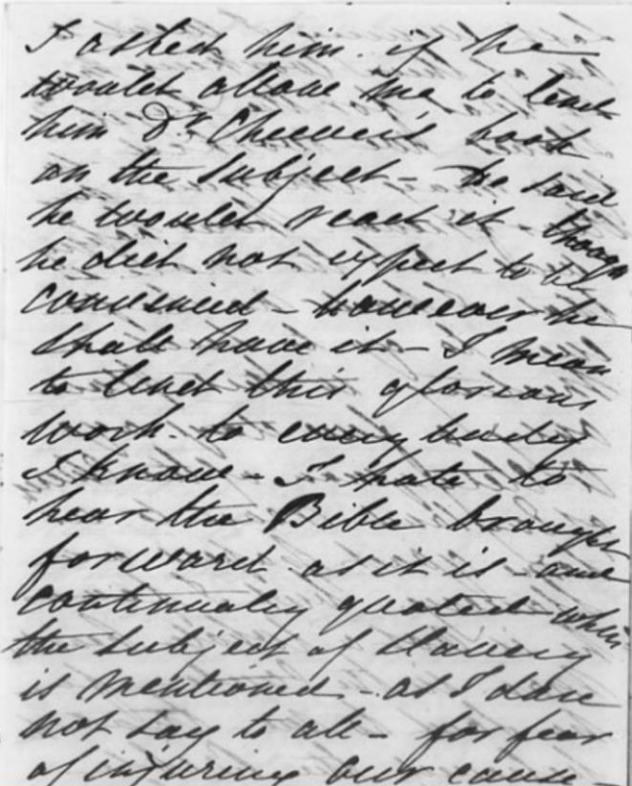
Example choices:

Filter pages:

| All | Completed (5,703) | Needs Review (3,647) | In Progress (2) | Not Started (0) |
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| General Correspondence, 1841-1865 | General Correspondence, 1866-1880 | General Correspondence, 1881-1885 | General Correspondence, 1886-1912 | General Correspondence, 1886-1912 |
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| ✓ Complete | Needs Review | ✓ Complete | ✓ Complete | |
| General Correspondence, Undated | Additional correspondence | Invitations | Notes and notebooks | |

And then the transcriber reads the handwritten document, determines what the text is, and then types it into the transcription window. This work allows for the handwritten text to be machine readable, making it more accessible.

Here is an image of the handwritten text and what was transcribed and reviewed.

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>I asked him if he would allow me to lead him Dr. Cheever's book on the subject - he said he would read it though he did not expect to be convinced - however he shall have it - I mean to lend their glorious work to every body I know - I hate to hear the Bible brought forward as it is and continually quoted when the subject of slavery is mentioned - as I dare not say to all - for fear of injuring our cause -</p> | <p>✓ Completed</p> <p>Registered Contributors: 2</p> <p>This transcription is finished! You can read and add tags.</p> <p>I asked him if he would allow me to lead him Dr. Cheever's book on the subject - he said he would read it though he did not expect to be convinced however he shall have it. I mean to lend their glorious work to every body I know. I hate to hear the Bible brought forward as it is and continually quoted when the subject of slavery is mentioned as I dare not say to all for fear of injuring our cause as I would say to you my dear friend. Let the Bible for ever perish if it does sanction slavery - let it allow</p> |
|---|--|

Original Letter

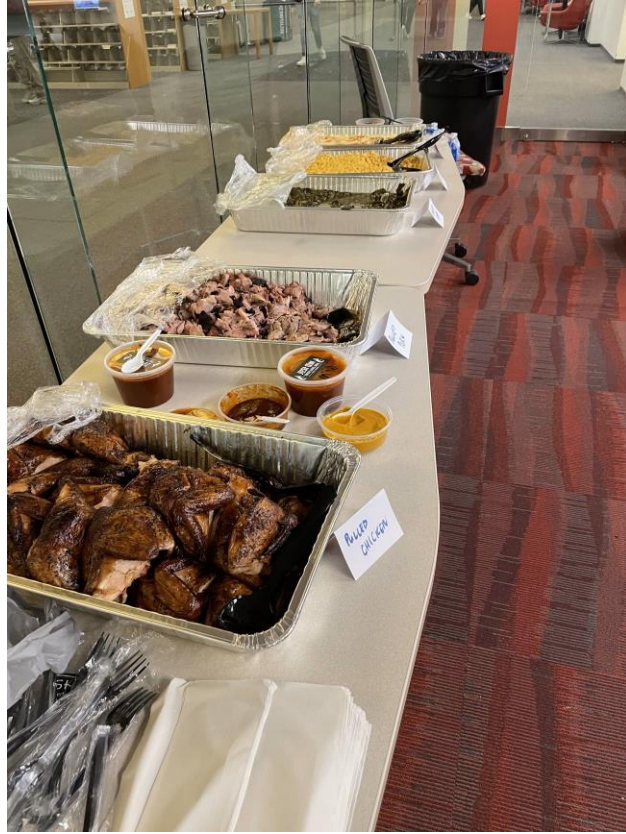
Transcription

Reading handwritten text from the period when Douglass was writing can be very challenging, but with persistence, the transcriber can develop the skill to decipher what was said. This is also why it is very important to have the transcriptions reviewed.

Looking to the future, we hope to see more people at Douglass Day 2025!







Gather and Make Some Noise – Shout Out for 20 years of McNair Scholars at UC



Amy Koshoffer, Assistant Director, Research and Data Services, UC Libraries

April 3 marked the 20th year-end celebration of the [McNair Scholar Program](#), or better known as the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. UC joined this amazing national PhD preparatory program in April 2004. The initial program started with just 14 institutions in 1989 but now boasts more than 200 participant institutions. Marking another big anniversary is the current director of the UC program, Dr. Cheri Westmoreland, who has been with the program since November 2004.

Dr. Ronald E McNair was the second African American astronaut ([Guion Bulford](#) was the first) and a physicist. He died at the age of 35 in the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger mission. He loved science so much and learning even more. At the age of nine, he refused to leave the segregated Lake City Public Library without being allowed to check out the books he was reading ([Wikipedia](#)). Today that same library is named after him. He was recruited to be an astronaut through NASA efforts to increase representation of more women and minorities which included outreach from Nichelle Nichols.











In honor of Dr. McNair, the [Department of Education](#) developed the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. Over the twenty years, UC program developed two programs, the McNair Traditional (federal program) and the McNair PREP/ STARS program which combined has graduated over 260 students of which 120 have gone on to advanced degrees. The McNair scholars come from all UC colleges offering undergraduate degrees ranging in majors including music education, engineering, fashion design, biology, mathematics, business, communications, creative writing, psychology, speech language hearing sciences, physical therapy, medical sciences, and public health. Currently, over 70% of the high-achieving scholars are first-generation college students and over 80% of the scholars identify as being from an ethnic background traditionally underrepresented in graduate studies. At the moment, there are 54 scholars, sophomore to senior in the McNair Traditional (federal program) and McNair Prep programs.

Scholars can also participate in a full-time, eight-week summer internship (typically June through July). This intensive summer research program includes their research with a faculty mentor as well as participation in summer seminars where students focus on crafting the statement of purpose for graduate school, preparing for graduate school testing (such as the GRE), refining the graduate school application list, and building research presentation and writing skills. As a part of the internship, scholars will also present their research both orally as a part of the International Student Symposium and in the SURF Poster Capstone in August. The International Student Symposium is a partnership between several McNair Scholars Programs and the University of Zagreb, Croatia. The internship ends with a graduate

school tour in a relevant city in the United States (past locations include Washington D. C., Atlanta, etc.). Furthermore, scholars commit to present at a national or regional student or professional conference during the academic year. The scholar's internship is culminated through the writing of a publishable research paper.

Colleagues, please reach out and applaud the work of our McNair Program and the folks who do this work. Thank you to Dr. Cheri Westmoreland, Charity Winburn and Ty Fields. You can also play a role in these programs as an important part is mentorship. Please consider mentoring a McNair Scholar.

[Many thanks to Charity Winburn for her contributions to this article]

What are you reading?

MK Lamkin - Not a book, but I have been listening to the "Higher Education Anti-Racist Teaching (H.E.A.R.T.)" Podcast <https://heartuconn.podbean.com/>. I especially recommend the March 1, 2024 episode on "Moving from Theory to Practice" with special focus on the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation framework. For educators and learners of any topic, this podcast will help you responsibly integrate reflection and discussion on causes and consequences of on-going race-based disparities.

Upcoming Events



- CARA Retreat May 10, 2 pm to 5 pm, Ludlow Wines
- Race and Racism in Cincinnati: A 3-Part Docuseries: [Buy Tickets](#)

- Part 1: Friday, June 7, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
 - Part 2: Friday, June 14, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
 - Part 3: Friday, June 21, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
- [View the Summer 2024 Academic Calendar](#)

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 in Fall 2024.

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