

**50th Commemoration of the Bursar's Office Takeover  
University Planning Committee Meeting**  
Hardin Hall, Rebecca Crown Center

Wednesday, September 20, 2017  
9:00 – 10:30 AM

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees**

Kamilah Allen	Nancy Cunniff	Teresa Mastin
Dan Amato	John Franklin	Susan Olson
Alan Anderson	Austin Gardner	Karyn Reif
Jabbar R. Bennett	Christopher Gordon	Nsombi Ricketts
Kathleen Bethel	Jann Grovogui	Michele Rogers
Donna Biernadski	Christopher Pevey Harry	Maria Sanchez
Dana Bozeman	Joseph Holtgreive	Jeffrey Sterling '85
Ann Bradlow	Michelle Jackson	Tim Stevens
Ron Braeutigam	E. Patrick Johnson	Alecia Wartowski
Theresa Bratanch	Peter Kaye	Nicole Eggleston Watkins
Kasey Brown	Kevin Leonard	Chris Watson
Lesley-Ann Brown-Henderson	Eugene Lowe, Jr.	Lee West
Val Buchanan	Viorica Marian	Charles Whitaker
Carol Cahill	MaryAnn Marsh '85	Brittany Williams
Onis Cheathams	Travis Martin	Damon Williams
		Charla Wilson

**Welcome and Introductions**

Associate Provost and Chief Diversity Jabbar R. Bennett welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Bursar's Office Takeover University Planning Committee (BOTC).

Kathleen Bethel, African American Studies Librarian, provided background information on the 1968 takeover of the Bursar's Office. Of particular importance was the climate of the 1960's, leading up to the takeover, which included riots in urban areas across the country and the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was during this time that Black students on Northwestern's campus [submitted demands to the University administration](#). For Members Only (FMO), the Black Student Alliance, and other students and student groups, sent a message to the administration with requests, such as establishing a Black studies program, providing counseling support for those experiencing racism, the creation of a space for Black students, and to desegregate Northwestern's real estate holdings in Evanston, among others. After the students' deadline was not met, they strategically took over the Bursar's Office, which housed the University's only computer. The University responded quickly, and on May 4, 1968 the administration agreed to meet with the students and discuss their demands. At the time, *The Daily Northwestern* published a [special issue on the Takeover](#), and more recently Northwestern faculty member Martha Biondi published a book highlighting the event entitled, "[A Black Revolution on Campus](#)". Additionally, University Archives maintains an [online exhibit on the](#)

[Bursar's Office Takeover](#), which includes photos, audio recordings of speeches, and other important documents and resources.

## Open Discussion

### History

Eugene Lowe, Jr., Special Assistant to the President, discussed the importance of history in how the Bursar's Office Takeover is discussed, especially when it comes to connecting historical events to the present. He noted that institutional discourse on diversity has shifted from race-based to a more broad notion of diversity today. This commemoration is an opportunity to highlight the continued salience of history; a chance to teach students community members why talking about race is complimentary to discussing diversity and inclusion.

Ann Bradlow, Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives in WCAS and Professor of Linguistics, offered suggestions on connecting the past with the present, such as contrasting the [Black Student Experience Task Force recommendations](#) with the [1968 demands](#), as well as comparing the style and strategy of protest in the 1960s to the present.

Dana Bozeman, Associate Director of Student Engagement in TGS, shared that when thinking about her experience as an undergraduate student, a historical context would have been helpful to her and could assist generations to come. An exhibit and timeline that notes key events leading up to the actual takeover would be powerful. It is also important for students to consider the bravery that brought those students to that space, and to give context, which is sometimes lost as generations pass. Charla Wilson, University Archivist for the Black Experience, added that the University Archives' [digital exhibit on the Bursar's Office Takeover](#) will be revamped this academic year to include a timeline of key events.

Travis Martin, Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, added that there is a divide in Greek life between older alumni and current students, which could be addressed in our programming. There is a need to share with older alumni how students demonstrate currently, and how they are impacted by today's campus and national climates.

Alecia Wartowski, Director of Programs at the Women's Center, mentioned that [Bryan Stevenson](#) has talked about the need for [truth and reconciliation](#) when considering U.S. racial history and contemporary social justice issues. Northwestern could be candid about the Takeover, and begin a process of truth and reconciliation, helping the institution to move forward.

Kevin Leonard, University Archivist, noted that there is a longer history of Black students' struggle on our campus leading up to the 1968 protests, and suggested Northwestern alumnus Bill Branch's account of race at Northwestern in the 1940's for a deeper context.

Kasey Brown, Coordinator of For Members Only (FMO), mentioned that she participated in the [fall 2015 student demonstration at Northwestern](#), and that it was a great experience. She was not aware of the Bursar's Office Takeover or what was included in those student demands, and hearing more about this historical event was eye opening. In terms of planning, it is important to engage students early in the process, which may be difficult because students are unaware of the history, and it is not discussed or taught. Educational outreach will be important to increase student engagement.

### Programming

Nancy Cunniff, Director of [One Book One Northwestern](#) (OBON), asked what the goal of the celebration should be. She suggested one could be to teach a lesson on how to make impactful, nonviolent change, and another to hear stories from alumni who participated in the 1968 Takeover.

Provost Bennett suggested the following:

- To educate the campus community about the history of the Bursar's Office Takeover
- To acknowledge the impact of the Takeover on our alumni and campus culture
- To celebrate Northwestern's progress in achieving greater diversity
- To underscore our commit to inclusive excellence

Cunniff added that OBON has begun a [student-created podcast](#) this year, focusing on equality. One of the podcast episodes could be dedicated to the Commemoration, and shared on a national level. It was also suggested that we consider who our target audience is when developing the programming, how many people we want to engage, and doing outreach to individuals who are not currently involved or thinking about social justice, and diversity and inclusion on campus.

John Franklin, Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at Feinberg School of Medicine, suggested the committee anticipate backlash as we begin communicating Commemoration activities and the history of the Takeover, as it is still a contentious issue. Our alumni and students may have a visceral reaction and we should prepare and be proactive in educating and engaging them.

MaryAnn Marsh '85 (WCAS) added that the yearlong celebration should be positive, and that the committee should host events that celebrate the efforts of Black students and faculty, the University, and the progress that has been made.

E. Patrick Johnson, Chair, Department of African American Studies, Carlos Montezuma Professor of African American Studies and Performance Studies, and Director of the Black Arts Initiative, added that he is directing a student theatrical performance, which aligns with Commemoration programming. African American Studies would like their students to be involved and they are invested in ensuring that Commemoration programming is widely publicized internally and externally. Martha Biondi, Professor of African American Studies and History, is also curating a symposium and inviting leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement and other prominent figures such as Provost Holloway, to take part.

African American Studies will be hosting the annual Leon Forrest Lecture on May 2, 2018 featuring award-winning poet, playwright, and writer Angela Jackson '77 (WCAS).

Brittany Williams, Assistant Director for Events Planning at Norris University Center, requested the committee begin booking space right away, especially due to spring quarter being the busiest time for events on campus. She has offered to assist with space needs around campus, not only Norris.

## **Subcommittees**

The following subcommittees were proposed:

- *Engagement*- Develop strategies to engage students, faculty, staff, and alumni in Commemoration programming
- *Marketing and Communication*- Develop a marketing and communications strategy for Commemoration programming
- *Programming*- Develop Commemoration events throughout the year to highlight the history of the Bursar's Office Takeover
- *Legacy/Memorial*- Brainstorm options for a permanent campus memorial of the Bursar's Office Takeover

Please [complete this survey](#) to note your interest in participating on a subcommittee. Subcommittee membership will be discussed during the October meeting.

Recommendations for additional subcommittees can be sent to [diversity@northwestern.edu](mailto:diversity@northwestern.edu)

## Northwestern University Black Alumni Association (NUBAA) Updates

Jeffrey Sterling '85 (WCAS), NUBAA President, gave an overview of their plans for commemorating the Bursar's Office Takeover, spanning fall 2017 through fall 2018. Highlights included:

- [The Takeover: The Revolution of the Black Experience at Northwestern University](#) (video)
- Partnership with University Archives to document the Black experience at Northwestern. See the [online exhibit of the 1968 student protests](#).
- Fundraising campaign to support students and related initiatives
- Honoring and celebrating the "Bursar 100"- NUBAA will reach out to individuals who were involved in the 1968 Takeover, and invite them to return to Northwestern to participate in Commemoration activities
- Requesting nominations to honor individuals who have impacted the Black experience at Northwestern over time
- Collaborating with various subgroups of former students within the alumni community
- Working with schools and departments, inviting them to collaborate with their organization throughout the year, as well as community partners such as the Evanston YMCA and 2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church
- Hosting their annual [NUBAA Summit and Salute to Excellence Gala in connect with Commemoration programming](#)

NUBAA's Commemoration schedule and additional registration information is available at [nubaa.org/nubaa-events/](http://nubaa.org/nubaa-events/).

To request an electronic copy of the NUBAA meeting slides, please reach out to Jeff Sterling ([sterlingshci@msn.com](mailto:sterlingshci@msn.com)).

## University Calendar of Events

The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion will work to produce a calendar of events, spanning fall 2017 through spring 2018. The calendar will be continuously updated and programming and events can be added by emailing [diversity@northwestern.edu](mailto:diversity@northwestern.edu)

Nancy Cunniff recommended the committee empower students to create programming that inspires them.

## Next Steps

- The University Planning Committee will meet monthly through spring quarter 2018
- Subcommittees will work between full-committee meetings and provide regular updates
- A website will be launched to communicate campus-wide programming
- The University Planning Committee will further explore and develop programming for fall 2017 through spring 2018

*The next University Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for:*  
Monday, October 23, 12:00-1:30pm  
Northwestern Room, Norris University Center  
1999 Campus Drive