

# AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

IN THE RECORDS OF WEST AFRICAN HISTORY, "GRIOT" (PRONOUNCED GREE-OH) WAS THE HONORED NAME BESTOWED UPON WISE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE STORY TELLERS ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF DOCUMENTING TRIBAL HISTORIES AND GENEALOGIES.

## the GRIOT

**This issue covers:**

OPEN HOUSE  
ICE CREAM SOCIAL  
REAL TALK  
and more...



BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CULTURAL CENTER  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

# Letter From the Editor



Hi,

Most importantly, a gigantic warm welcome and welcome to all pursuers of the GRIOT. I am eager to fill in as the designer and editorial manager of this distribution for my second year at CSU. In spite of the fact that we are longer than a month into school, I want to the open door to welcome first-year understudies, regardless of whether it's your first year in school, or at CSU by and large. I trust all of you have had a smooth change into CSU and ideally the Black/African American Cultural Center. Anyway much of the time you decide to visit the Center, I trust it encourages energy and agreeableness for you in light of the fact that, at this overwhelmingly white organization, we aren't regularly given our own spaces of articulation for individuals who appear as though us.

In spite of the PANDEMIC making most of our courses virtual, trust that there are numerous open doors that may give you more secure admittance to cultivate positive impact, regardless of whether it's joining a student organization or club, or heading off to any occasions put on by B/AACC. Kindly keep on appearing, show out, and be heard, be sheltered, and seen. Some portion of Black History is appearing excluded. Making our own spaces and networks of commitment is our M.O. At times, it can feel like change is moderate, yet please relax and realize that as long as you have the drive to have any kind of effect, you're now miles ahead. It brings me euphoria to see your countenances, any way you decide to appear.

***Black and Better  
Than Ever,  
Eric Afrifa***

# Welcome from Pro Staff

**We are excited to be back on campus with our returning students and excited to continue welcoming new students to campus. We know that this year is looking A LOT different than years past, and maybe not even what 1st year students may have expected. None the less, we are HERE! No matter, we are here to let you know through it all, the madness**

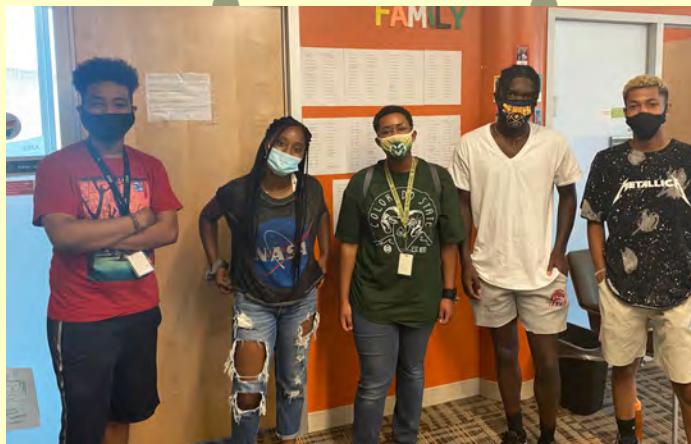
**#CANTHOLDUSBAACC!**



**We will continue to support you all as you begin and continue your education. We will continue to support each other as we fight against anti-blackness. We will continue to protect each other by wearing our masks, physically distancing, and creating opportunities for academic and social engagement as you prepare for life beyond CSU. No matter all the changes, our passion to serve you all has not and will not change. All the best this academic year and always remember, #WEGOTYOURBAACC!**

# OPEN HOUSE

Coming back to school can mean different things to different people. No matter what it means to you, The Black/ African American Cultural Center welcomes every student with open arms. This year on August 23rd, The Black/ African American Cultural Center held a welcome event for First-Year Students to come and pick up a B/AACC Shirt, Facemask, Stickers, and other CSU Gear. This was a great opportunity for First-Year Student to not only come pick up some swag but also to meet the Professional Staff and other students to get to know more about each other and the Center. Students attended this event from 11 am to 3 pm. If you weren't able to attend the event it is not too late to come to the Black/ African American Cultural Center to pick up some swag.



WRITTEN BY:  
JAYLEN  
SPIRES

# ICE CREAM SOCIAL

The Black African American Cultural Center hosted its annual Ice Cream Social on September 2nd, 2020. The social was a great way for B/AACC to test out the effectiveness of their safe, social distancing measures in the office. Those who visited the office in-person were engaged with those who attended over Zoom through a projected computer screen on the large tv screen in the office.

Hosted mostly over Zoom, this year's social looked very different compared to prior years. With a great playlist contributing to the vibrant atmosphere in the office, students were offered vouchers for free Ben & Jerry's ice cream as a means of contributing to safe, social distancing practices. This also provided them with the chance to explore Old Town Fort Collins on their own time. The Ice Cream Social was also a great opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet each other in-person, some for the first time. The social provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere for new and transfer students hoping to get more involved and connected with the community.

There was a considerable amount of engagement from both student and staff, with a lot of new faces coming into the office and popping in on the Zoom call. Many students and staff enjoyed socializing with each other and learning about the awesome B/AACC-supported student organizations as well as how to get involved with them. They were introduced to the new virtual ways that these student organizations would be interacting with each other on a weekly basis.

Some of the student organizations that were in attendance included Africans United, the Black Student Alliance, United Men of Color as well as United Women of Color, and many others. Also, a couple of sorority and fraternity members came on the call in order to let new students know of their organization. The atmosphere that the B/AACC community aims to share is one with the internet to assist folks in finding their support network as they navigate a new and sometimes unfamiliar environment. This event is one of many that the B/AACC office puts together in an effort to strengthen the connection between students and with the continued community effort and support of students, staff, and pro staff, we hope to embrace another thriving and successful year.



Written by:  
Joslyn Oriji

# REAL TALK

In another Real Talk session, Cancel Culture, participants discussed the effects cancel culture has on media production and consumption. When a celebrity commits an unacceptable act, they are being held accountable for their actions by fans... sometimes. Participants brought up valid points like double standards for what is acceptable and what isn't for different celebrities. Participants questioned artists that committed crimes who are still very popular like Chris Brown's assault charge against Rihanna.

Real Talk provides a space for participants to engage in critical dialogue on controversial and/or relatable topics. During the Quarantine Chronicles session, participants were able to reflect on how they felt and what they did during the height of quarantine from Covid-19. Through sharing their experiences, participants made many connections speaking on what they wished they'd done or what they learned from quarantine. Mostly everyone agreed that quarantine forced many people to look inwards and learn more about themselves. The conclusion being the world will never be the same 'post' Covid-19 and social distancing.

Real Talk allows students to discuss current topics in mindful conversations. The structure allows for everyone to share their voice without restrictions. The conversation can grow into deeper connections that form realizations to the works of society and our lives. Students can pick at each other's brains and form solutions for the problems they are experiencing



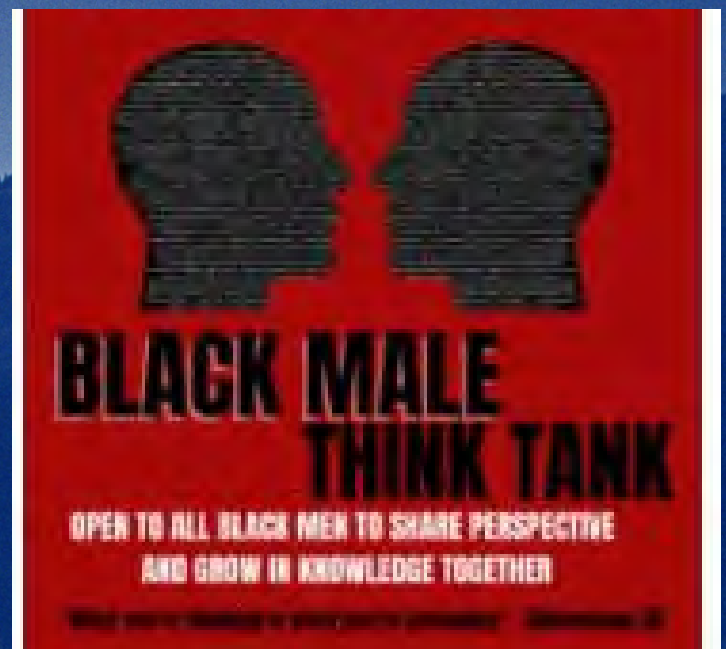
Written by: Alizayna Walton

# **BLACK MALE THINK TANK**

**The Black Male Think Tank is a space where I am able to share thoughts and ideas that don't normally come up in a daily conversation. It also allows for me to hear a multitude of different viewpoints, making myself a more well rounded person, aiding me to understand those different opinions and views that are present in society.**

*Written by:  
Maliek Swain*

**Black Male Think Tank also gives a place for me to be in community with other black males and create a deeper connection with them**



# rites of passage *REMIX*

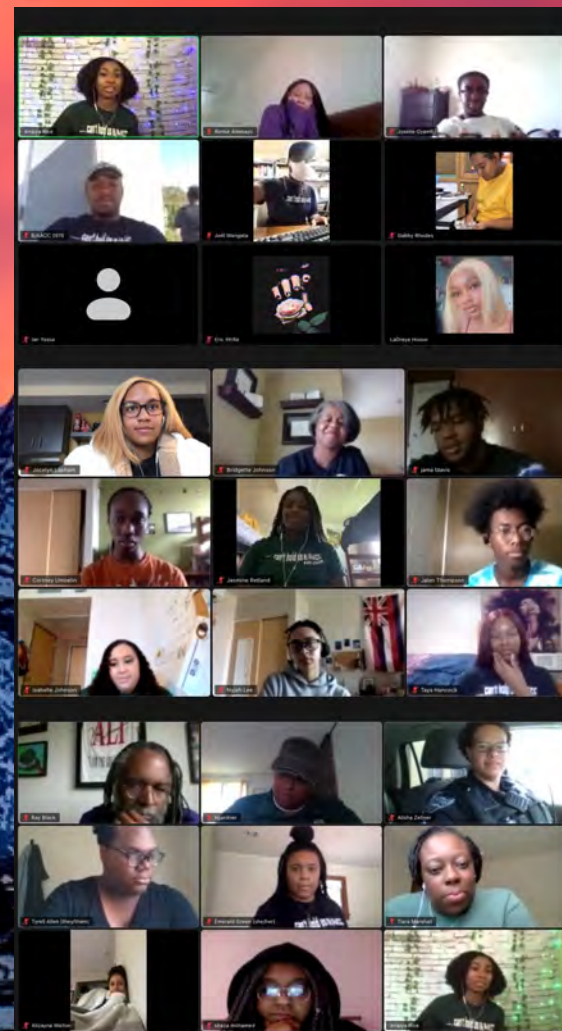
On September 26, B/AACC holds its annual Rites of Passage Retreat, but a little differently. This year the retreat was completely virtual and held through Zoom. However, the connections made and the words spoken were just as impactful.

The retreat started off with B/AACC Pro Staff introducing themselves and Ms.B explaining the history of the Rites of Passage Retreat. This was followed by a video explaining the B/AACC office and the importance it holds to many students. The B.E.S.T. staff was introduced next with a video of their own. Next, the first years were given their opportunity to introduce themselves in breakout rooms and then again in the large group. Ms.B followed this up with a message of identities and how our intersectionality of blackness shows up differently for everyone.

Lastly after, the thirty minute break, the retreat resumed with the icebreaker activity Two Truths and One Lie led by Ronke. Leading the next discussion was Joselyn and Taya asking the question 'What does it mean to be on a PWI?'. This question led to a thoughtful discussion on how some students have felt "too ghetto" for the campus culture, but not black enough for other spaces. Some people expressed having found a safe space within the B/AACC office. Many students were able to identify with the feeling of trying to seek out Black people on campus to find community. The retreat ended with a nice reflection of what people were taking away from the retreat and embracing the community that was created through a zoom call.

Written by;  
Taya Hancock

After the wisdom shared by Ms.B, Black CSU faculty and alumni also joined the zoom call. We were joined by Dr. Black, Tiara Marshall, Tyrell Allen, Alisha Zellener, and Helena Gardner. These faculty members gifted first year students with advice to help them navigate the next four years at CSU. Some of the advice given was reaching out to your professors when you need help, remembering that you belong here, and if there's something you're missing, create it. At the end of this discussion Ms.B had first year students give advice to CSU faculty and alumni. Students advised faculty and alumni to continue to give them advice and to remember that students balance a lot also. Lastly, faculty and alumni were thanked for building a community of black leaders for students to look up to.





# First Year *EXPERIENCE*

Being a Black/African American student in a predominantly white university can be an unsettling thought. My friend Jakobe and I have had to adjust to the atmosphere and have found that B/AACC - the Black/African American Cultural Center, has helped with this transition not only to college but also, just providing comfort with the presence of other Black students and staff. But a little bit about me. I'm Mykala Wimberley and I'm a freshman at Colorado State University, I come from a single mother household. I've always been very organized my entire life and planned for the type of future I want in mind, and I have a boyfriend which I've been dating for two years and some change. You must be thinking dang that's cool that you can attend this large university even though you're from a single mother household and you have these qualities that are great for college. Your transition must've been really smooth, you have so much support. Well you're partially correct the time management and organization has helped me to do well in college however I have not had the smoothest transition. During the first week or two of me being at Colorado State I realized that I no longer wanted to be a biology major, which was very hard for me to cope with because my entire life I've told myself that I will be a biology major so that I can be a doctor. But I realized that being a doctor isn't something I really wanted to do for the rest of my life. On top of no longer knowing what I wanted out of life or a career, I was struggling with homesickness. It felt like my world was falling apart and I just felt overwhelmed and that maybe I wasn't meant to be in college and I wanted to leave CSU.

For my friend Jakobe he has had a smoother transition to CSU than I think I will ever have. But he has had to deal with the uncomfortable feeling of not seeing many black students here. Me and Jakobe went to the same high school, and we had a lot more diversity in the school seeing Hispanic students and African American students whereas now it seems like me and him are the only two African American students on campus. But I feel as though it was more of a shock at first for him because he has become more comfortable around CSU.

So overall if you're a student having a rough time transitioning to CSU it's okay if your transition isn't smooth, I remember feeling guilty because my transition hasn't been smooth and it made me think, well if it's not smooth it's not meant to be. But it's okay if it's not smooth you just need to figure out how to cope with it and move forward, find the support you need and move forward.

*WRITTEN BY:*  
*Mykala Wimberley*

My mom however, did not approve of me leaving without a plan and didn't want me to give up so easily so she told me to give it a semester and then figure out what I wanted. At the moment it felt like she crushed my heart into a million pieces, but I think it was reasonable. So my transition to CSU was very bumpy and very emotional. It still is even in week six of classes, but I think it is more personal than academic, because academically you wouldn't even know I struggle so much being here on campus. There is so much change and uncertainty when going to a big university, which I could've never even expected and it's even more because we are doing this during a pandemic, which has taken away so many opportunities and added stress in many ways - I just had to stay in the springs for a week because my roommates were exposed.

