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## Unity House News Fall 2013

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# UNITY HOUSE NEWS

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## Standing on the Shoulders of the Afro-American Society

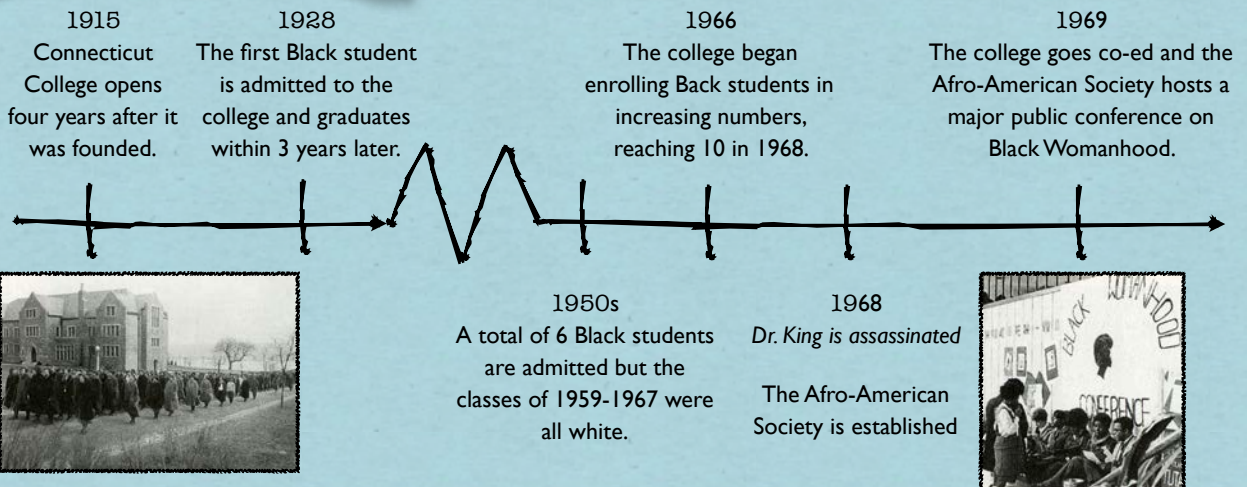
Melanie Pagan, Assistant Director of Unity House

A little over a year ago I began working on a project to research the history of people of color at Connecticut College, specifically in relation to the student organizations affiliated with Unity House. The project began as an initiative to empower our student leaders and give them additional context for the work that they do in their respective groups.

After my first presentation for the Unity House Ambassadors, the project kept growing! Other students, staff, and faculty members became interested in learning the history we all stand on here at Conn. Countless conversations turned into events and additional projects. As a result, I have felt an undying gratitude to those that came before me, the 25 women, members of the Afro-American Society, who took over Fanning Hall on May 6, 1971 and started a Conn revolution. The next few pages highlight some of the accomplishments of the clubs affiliated with our center. Unity House would've never existed without all of you. Thank you and keep pushing forward.



## TIMELINE





# BIG SIB TRAINING



## The ALANA Program makes Unity House history!

ALMOST 15 YEARS AGO THE ALANA BIG SISTER/BIG BROTHER PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED AT UNITY HOUSE AS A WAY TO SUPPORT FIRST GENERATION AND STUDENTS OF COLOR IN THEIR FIRST YEAR AT CONN. EVERY YEAR THE PROGRAM KEEPS GROWING AND THIS YEAR MARKS THE BIGGEST GROUP IN UNITY HISTORY!

It was just three years ago that we welcomed the Class of 2014 to campus during the Genesis Pre-Orientation Program. Many of those students paid it forward by becoming Big Sibs and Coordinators in the following years. That effort by the students, staff, and campus members has strengthened the program that now serves 50 first year students, and 24 upperclassmen.

For those who are not aware of the details of the ALANA program, it is a three tier model where freshmen receive three mentors: a Big Sibling, a Coordinator, and a Unity House Director. It's designed so that students are able to benefit from different types of mentorship. Many of our students go on to serve as student leaders after their year as Lil Sibs and/or Big Sibs and have been able to use their training and experiences in other areas at Connecticut College. It is always a privilege to see all that our ALANAs have accomplished after their first year as Lil Sibs. Please know that you all make us very proud!



## NUMBERS

ALANA Program  
2010-2011

**52**  
participants

ALANA Program  
2013-2014

**74**  
participants

Currently on campus  
there are over 165  
ALANAs!



1960'S	1970'S	1980'S	1990'S	2000'S	2010'S
Afro-American Society	Afro-American Society/ Umoja (Eclipse Show)	Umoja (Eclipse Show)	Umoja (Eclipse Show)	Umoja	Umoja
				Eclipse	Eclipse
	Puerto Rican Cultural Club/La Unidad	La Unidad	La Unidad	La Unidad	La Unidad
				Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlan (MEChA)	Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlan (MEChA)
		Gospel Choir	Gospel Choir	Gospel Choir	Gospel Choir
		Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR)	Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR)	Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR)	Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR)
		Asian/Asian American Club	CC Asian Student Association (CCASA)	CC Asian Student Association (CCASA)	CC Asian Student Association (CCASA)
		Minority Student Steering Committee (MSSC)	Minority Student Steering Committee (MSSC)		
			Broaching Interracial Diversity (B.I.R.D.)	Intercultural Pride (I-Pride)	
				Feminist Majority	Feminist Majority (moved to the Women's Center)
				Sexual Orientations United for Liberation (SOUL)	Spectrum (LGBTQ Center)
					Queer Students of Color (QPOC)
					Association of Multiracial & Biracial Camels (AMBC)

## Unity House Club History

Students have been organizing around issues of diversity for decades. Their efforts have never been in vain as they have sparked other initiatives and have aided to the awareness and retention of students of color and other minorities on campus.

If you are interested in learning about what your student organization accomplished years prior, feel free to visit Unity House or the Archive Center in the library as many of these clubs have left documentation of their work.

If you are an alumnus who has pictures, letters, minutes, or posters of Unity House students groups, please send them to Unity House as we are working to have a complete history of all student initiatives at the college.

# TIMELINE

1969-1976

Dr. Jewel Cobb, noted for cancer research, Dean of the College and professor of Zoology became a strong advocate for Black students.



1970

The College begins to diversify its curriculum after the efforts of the Afro-American Society.



1971

Black students are seriously recruited and admitted to the college. Blackstone was turned into the predominately black dorm and the Afro-American Center is opened.



MAY 6, 1971

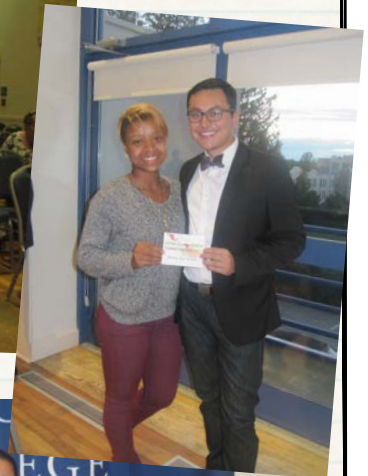
25 members of the Afro-American Society staged a sit-in in Fanning Hall shortly after midnight. They left the next morning after President Shain promised that there would be 71 black students by the opening of the next school year and that the College would have a full-time Black admissions officer.

# Fall 2013 Pictures!

WELCOME BACK BBQ



LATINO HERITAGE MONTH CONVOCATION



## TIMELINE

1970'S

La Unidad is formed. During this time there was also a organization called the Puerto Rican Cultural Club.



1975

The first Eclipse Weekend was held jointly with the Coast Guard Academy.

1983

"Celebration I," the First Minority Alumni reunion was held.



MAY 1, 1986

Second Fanning Takeover of members of SOAR, UMOJA, and La Unidad. Students demanded an increase of students of color, staff and faculty of color, an affirmative action officer and series of events to support diversity (racial awareness workshops, conferences, & more).

1985

The Connecticut College SOAR chapter is established.





# Continuing the Legacy: Unity House Student Organizations



## ASSOCIATION OF MULTIRACIAL AND BIRACIAL CAMELS

Meetings are held on Sundays at Unity House at 7pm!

For more information contact Tess Mikolajczak at [tmikolaj@conncoll.edu](mailto:tmikolaj@conncoll.edu)



## CONNECTICUT COLLEGE ASIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION (CCASA)

Meetings are held weekly on Sundays at Unity House at 8pm!

For more info contact Gigi Gonzalez at [agonzalez@conncoll.edu](mailto:agonzalez@conncoll.edu)



## ECLIPSE

Info Sessions and auditions are coming up in the fall and spring!

For more information contact Mayra Valle at [mvalle@conncoll.edu](mailto:mvalle@conncoll.edu)



## GOSPEL CHOIR

Rehearsals are held on Sundays in Cummings at 8pm!

For more information contact Hillary Coleman at [hcoleman@conncoll.edu](mailto:hcoleman@conncoll.edu)



## LA UNIDAD

Meetings are held on Mondays at Unity House at 9pm!

For more information contact Priscilla Centeno at [pcenteno@conncoll.edu](mailto:pcenteno@conncoll.edu)



## MOVIMIENTO ESTUDIANTIL CHICANO DE ATZLAN

Meetings are held on Fridays at Unity House at 9pm!

For more information contact Izamar Moya at [imoya@conncoll.edu](mailto:imoya@conncoll.edu)



## QUEER PEOPLE OF COLOR (PLUS ALLIES)

Meetings are held on Thursdays in the LGBTQ Center at 7pm!

For more information contact Anthony Sis at [asis@conncoll.edu](mailto:asis@conncoll.edu)



## SOCIETY ORGANIZED AGAINST RACISM

Meetings are held on Tuesdays at Unity House at 8pm!

For more information contact Jasmine Kelekay at [jkekay@conncoll.edu](mailto:jkekay@conncoll.edu)



## UMOJA THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

Meetings are held on Tuesdays in the Lambdin Game Room at 9pm!

For more information contact Chris Dean at [cdean@conncoll.edu](mailto:cdean@conncoll.edu)

# TIMELINE

1987  
The Minority Student Steering Committee (MSSC) was created to monitor the administrations's progress.



1996  
The ten year Fanning Takeover Commemoration

2000  
ALANA Big Sister/ Big Brother program was established

1987  
Affirmative Action Officer was hired.

1989  
Unity House moved to the central campus.

1994  
Unity Alumni Council established a Unity Scholarship Fund for students of color.



2003  
Unity clubs demanded a better response to racial incidents on campus. The college canceled a day of classes and had a campus wide meeting.



# Annual Unity House Events

## NOVEMBER 2013

Native American Heritage Month

Week of events 11/11-11/17

## DECEMBER 2013

Unity Winter Jubilee

Monday, December 9, Pepsico Room, Unity House, 5pm

Food, Prizes, Games & more!

## JANUARY 2014

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Commemoration

Week of events 1/27-1/31

## FEBRUARY 2014

Black History Month Convocation

Monday, February 3, 1941 Room, Crozier-Williams, 7pm

## APRIL 2014

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month Convocation

Monday, April 7, 1941 Room, Crozier-Williams, 7pm

## MAY 2014

End of the Year BBQ

Tuesday, May 6, Unity House, 4pm

## Diversity Resource Library

Located in the  
Conference Room at  
Unity House!

### October's Featured Books (A-Z)

#### Asian American Studies

#### Now: A Critical Reader

Edited by Jean Yu-Wen Shen  
Wu and Thomas C. Chen

#### Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writings from the Antilles

Edited by Thomas Glave

#### The History of White People

by Nell Irvin Painter

#### The Mixoquiahuala Letters

by Ana Castillo

#### This Far by Faith: Stories from the African-American Religious Experience

by Juan Williams and Quilton  
Dixie

### HISTORY IN THE MAKING

If you are a part of a Unity House student club, or you are looking to start a new club dedicated to diversity, you are history in the making and we want to know about your accomplishments! Though sometimes it might not feel like it, know that you are making a difference at Conn and you are part of a larger story. Please see Melanie Pagan, Assistant Director of Unity House, to talk about how to document your club's history!

## TIMELINE

