

# The GRIOT

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VOLUME I, SEPTEMBER ISSUE

In the records of West African history, "Griot" (pronounced gree-oh) was the honored name bestowed on wise and knowledgeable story tellers entrusted with the task of documenting tribal histories and genealogies.

## Your Solution to Professor Mayhem

Colorado State University

Brittany Sango

A new year has rolled around and once again, it's time to register for classes. The process of selecting classes can turn into a stressful time as students realize that their course load will increase or maybe they're dreading taking that science or statistics class required for their major.

Instead of asking your peers about the future class you will take or the professor you have not heard of, try [www.ramratings.com](http://www.ramratings.com).

Ramratings.com is a useful site for any student having trouble deciding whether they want to take a certain class or have it with a certain professor.

Founded in the summer of 2002 through [openratings.com](http://openratings.com), ram ratings allows students to anonymously submit opinions about professors and classes and

openly communicate with other students.

Let's face it. Finding classes that fit into your schedule is hard enough. You don't need the added stress and dread of taking a class you may not like with a professor that may ruin your semester.

According to the ram ratings website, the idea originated from two California Polytechnic State University students who were contemplating which professors to take for their classes.

The ideal professors would be ones that cared about their students and wanted to be in the classroom, and of course, every student wants the same.

After asking many students if they have heard of [ramratings.com](http://ramratings.com), I found that a lot of students were unaware of the website.

I figure that [ramratings.com](http://ramratings.com) can be a useful tool to students in case they ever find themselves debating between classes to take.

However, of the students who have utilized [ramratings.com](http://ramratings.com), most said it was beneficial. They based the previous evaluations on the cumulative GPA, which combines how well the professor presents material and recognize students' difficulties.

Students are encouraged to use [ramratings.com](http://ramratings.com) because it allows for students to openly engage with one another about their classroom experiences without the potential criticism of professors and other faculty members.

## Ramapalooza

Brittany Sango

"They be like smooth. What? Can you teach me how to dougie," and "hands on your head while you working on the floor" boomed through the speakers and down the hall.

Putting one hand behind their head and rolling their bodies. This was the scene witnessed by anyone walking into BACC on August 20th.

Students eagerly crowded the Black African American Cultural Center in anticipation of learning how to move to the rhythmic beat of "Teach Me How to Dougie" and "Flex" from the student staff and peer mentors.

Teaching students how to Flex and Dougie was part of BACC's participation in the scavenger hunt for this year's Ramapalooza.

The event began at 7 p.m. and ended at midnight.

A common

misconception of the student diversity offices is that they are only for the students of color. But BACC is making an effort to eliminate this.

During Ramapalooza many students of various ethnicities felt comfortable to walk into the office and learn how to dance.

Ashley Waller, a senior psychology major and senior advisor for the BACC office's mentors, wore a smile that brightened up the room as she switched back and forth from "Teach Me How to Dougie" and "Flex."

One of the most important goals of BACC's participation in Ramapalooza was getting students to feel comfortable coming into the office, and not only freshmen and transfer students, but students of other ethnicities as well.

"The girls who stayed the entire time really

enjoyed the dances. Instead of going to other offices and activities, they stayed in our office the entire time," said Waller.

"It seemed like they enjoyed the atmosphere, the music and the hospitality. They were comfortable with us," stated Waller.

"I hope it gave them another perception of the office different than what they had before on a more positive level," Waller said.

"I hope that it made them more comfortable with the idea of visiting the office, eliminated stereotypes and illustrated how open [BACC] is to meeting new faces, backgrounds and ideas," Waller said.

Everyone definitely had a great time meeting new people, learning new dances and participating in dance competitions.

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Black/  
African  
American  
Cultural  
Center

## *B/AACC Programs and Services*

### Rites of Passage Leadership Program

The Rites of Passage Leadership Program is designed to provide first-year African American students with guidance and support that will be beneficial for them throughout their higher education experience. The program focuses on responsibility, developing and enhancing leadership skills, creating networking opportunities on campus/community and assisting students with becoming well-rounded members of the African/African American community who are ready for success in their collegiate careers.

Within the first few weeks of classes during the fall semester, all first-year students have the opportunity to spend a weekend away from campus. The fall retreat is designed as an extension of the orientation process, established purely for the intent of building and sustaining a network of support amongst the students.

### The Albert C. Yates Leadership Development Institute

This program is for sophomore year students and is designed to enhance and develop leadership skills by providing tools through workshops and mentoring sessions, interactions with business professionals, alumni and faculty. This program has been redesigned from previous years to greater meet the needs of second year students.

LDI Objectives: The Black/African American Cultural Center believes that leadership engages leaders and participants, valuing all contributions, as well as sharing authority and responsibility. Leadership is not only about exec positions held, but also about vision and the ability to relate to people. Every person can benefit by cultivating these types of leadership skills. Our commitment is to develop leaders who are ethical, purposeful and inclusive.

### Donald W. Wilson Professional Mentoring Program

The Donald W. Wilson Professional Mentoring Program is designed for students classified as juniors and seniors. The purpose of this program is to provide an environment of mutual support and sharing amongst faculty/staff members and students through specifically designed, limited time and individually prescribed mentor/protégé relationships. The focus points are: strategic matching based on mentee/mentor interest and/or majors, training with a professional facilitator, monitoring and periodic check points, and programs run in 9 month increments (September – May).

### Fun Fridays

This program is one that students eagerly anticipate near the end of each week. What started off as an opportunity to relax and unwind on Friday afternoons by playing various board games and card games nearly two years ago, has emerged as one of the most highly-recognizable programs offered through our center.

Although board games and card games still have a strong foundation, there are two new activities that are aggressively rivaling to take over as the mainstays of Fun Fridays. With the new motion-control technology of video game consoles, students now have the option to relieve stressful events throughout the week by playing our newly-purchased Nintendo Wii gaming system.

If playing video games isn't enough of a stress-buster, then students have the option of taking advantage of our Friday Movie Matinee series. From time to time, we have also offered snacks such as popcorn and lemonade to help create a more relaxing atmosphere.

### Real Talk Series

These informal dialogue sessions are held on Tuesday afternoons at 4:00pm in room 204 of the Lory Student Center. The format of the dialogue series was constructed with the idea of students having the flexibility and freedom to voice their issues and concerns about various topics of interest relating to students at CSU.

Thought-provoking dialogue has always been considered healthy for the mind and soul, and students now have an official arena to thoughtfully and respectfully challenge each other in a controlled format co-facilitated by student staff members from the Black/African American Cultural Center.

### GPS Program

The purpose is to build unity amongst the African American students within the Poudre School District by supporting them while they are developing a sense of who they are and their potential while giving back to the Ft Collins community. Selected college African American students will be paired with a group of African American students from Poudre School District. They will meet once a month and discuss monthly topics. Poudre School District African American students – “Travelers”- will go to middle schools and high schools. Mentoring program that will focus on 3 main points: community service, leadership development and cultural awareness. There will be 4 tracks: middle school females, middle school males, high school females and high school males.



## *B/AACC Programs and Services Contd.*

### United Women of Color

This is an organization developed by students on campus. It was designed specifically for underrepresented women at Colorado State University to make a positive change on campus and in the community through service – All Women are Welcome!!

### United Men of Color

These group of men at Colorado State University work not only to empower each other but also to build strong connections within the group, and the surrounding community. The motto is “we all we got,” simply stating that the underrepresented men on campus must focus on coming together. All men are welcome.

## *African American Men and Women Dedicated to Excellence*

### **Brittany Sango**

A new program just for African American men has recently been created through the Office of Orientation and Transition Programs. I recently sat down with the peer mentor for the group, journalism major Joe Goings, to find out more.

The purpose of the African American men’s group is for new and transferring male students to feel more connected to the campus and each other.

“I would like to get them more connected with each other and with CSU. We are going to have a 14 week program, and nine or 10 meetings will consist of real talk sessions.”

The real talk sessions will focus mainly on how the students are doing with college so far and how to become more involved with CSU and the community.

One important goal for Goings with African American men is for them to feel comfortable.

“My first semester I was not comfortable with my surrounding area, the people here, and the campus as a whole. It was all new. I do not want to say culture shock, but it was a different atmosphere,” stated Goings.

Goings is qualified for the position because he is a fourth year student with a good grasp on campus resources. He feels that he can connect the African American men with the right people and have experienced what the men are going through.

For any African American men interested in joining, Goings says they can contact Marcus Elliott, the group’s advisor, or Goings himself. As of now, Goings is unsure of the meeting times but knows African American Men will meet weekly in the Black/African American Cultural Center.

Bubbly, charismatic and a beautiful smile are a few of the characteristics to define sophomore Human Development & Family Studies major Alexandria Grant. This year Grant is heading African American Women Dedicated to Excellence, the sister program of African American Men.

The primary goal of the program is for young women to find a place where they can feel comfortable.

“I just want this program to allow women of color to have a community and a home away from home,” stated Grant.

Grant reflected on her experience thus far at CSU as an out of state student. The transition was difficult, and Grant did not have another woman of color to turn to for guidance.

But Grant refuses to let other young women face their journey alone.

Grant’s journey alone changed when she joined AAWDE last year when the group first began. At the time Ms. Bridgette Johnson headed the group.

AAWDE will continue its goals of positively affecting young African American

women with the programs and events designed to create a strong bond among its members, while challenging them to be a better person and woman.

The group is designed to create a strong foundation needed for the young women to succeed on campus and in the community.

AAWDE’s structure consists of 12 meetings throughout the school year, and monthly weekend activities. Some of its programs are “CSU: Why Are You Here,” “Who Am I,” “Your Future” and “Relationships and My Role.”

Residence Director of Edwards Hall Latoya Noel is AAWDE’s staff mentor.

Meetings are held every Thursday 12:45-1:45 in the basement of Edwards Hall in classroom E8.

For any young woman interested in joining, please contact Grant via e-mail at agrant@rams.colostate.edu

## Student Staff and Peer Mentors



Danielle McConnell



Brittany Sango

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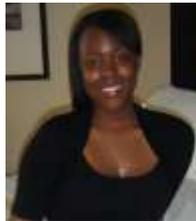
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## Freshman/Transfer Student Retreat 2010



Alexandria Norris  
Courtesy of:  
www.facebook.com

### Alexandria Norris

Empowering, Motivating, Captivating, and Life Changing are all one of many words I could use to describe the fall 2010 retreat.

Growing up my mother was barely around until my grandmother passed away. My mother attempted, however, she never acted like the loving mothers at my daycare. She would smile one Minute, then slap me in the face screaming, "You were a mistake."

After two months, I was placed into foster care and later adopted. From my separation with my mother, till sadly today, I haven't felt: love, kindness, acceptance, or importance. At first, the retreat merely seemed to be another program that would suck the life out of my Saturday and illustrate the relationships I fail to have.

Yet, I left with: tears in my eyes, confidence, - that said, "My Black is Beautiful!"- A support system, an outlet, assurance, pride, as well as a wake up call.

During the retreat the traditional icebreakers were conducted; which allowed friendships to build and walls to be torn down. There was laughing, joking, running, smiling, and competitive activities all to unite us into a safe and comfortable society. The activities constructed close and personal friendships, which seemed to have been created years before, in a matter of hours.

I expected the games and ice breaker: considering that a retreat is in my opinion, is a chance to escape reality and experience the present while making connections. However, the end activity blew my mind.

As we were forced to experience the pain our ancestors had endured, I was deeply hurt, disgusted, and mortified. While the tears rolled down my cheek, I vowed to improve my work ethics and continue to be dedicated, exuberant, social, hardworking, and embrace my heritage.

The retreat helped me say proudly, "I am a strong, independent, and college bound "AFRICAN AMERICAN."

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this life changing retreat. I learned a lot about myself and developed many friendships and found the place I can call my home away from home. Thank you!

Sincerely, Alexandria Nicole Norris

### Joshua Bond

My name is Joshua Bond. I recently transferred to CSU from a small junior college. Coming into this new school year I did not know what to expect from it all.

Being that Fort Collins is a different environment that I am not to use to, I had to adjust to it very quickly. Luckily for me, I had friends that I knew from back home that helped me with a quick adjustment to this new environment.

They also introduced me to other African Americans, like myself, around campus and in the BAACC office. Soon after I was invited to the annual retreat that the BAACC holds every year for freshmen and transfer students.

At the retreat I had an opportunity to meet almost every African American that attends CSU. I discovered things about myself that I never knew before. This retreat was a realization of how important it is to be a positive black male rather than a negative black male.

In our society people already perceive us as being dangerous, ignorant, uneducated, and inferior. It is our job to enlighten people that our culture is far from word of mouth and what they see on the television.

Being black is beautiful and we need to educate these individuals that are blind to the fact. This year I plan becoming a member of the UMC and really taking these steps to educate those who do not know who us African Americans really are.



Joshua Bond  
Courtesy of:  
www.facebook.com

## Aspirations of a Junior

### Gabrielle Ohaya

Coming into CSU, I had no idea what to expect. I was at a new school that was far from my first choice, and my priority was to finish a semester and transfer as soon as possible.

Initially I saw myself as a successful businesswoman in the future and I planned to major in business but after the first couple of months, I realized that may not work for me.

I soon began to feel lost I was struggling with figuring out what my strengths and passions were and all my goals began to seem unfeasible.

I wanted to make a difference in the world somehow, and since I realized that it may not be through business I began

to look for other routes.

It wasn't until I took my first ethnic studies class that I began to see a potential focus for myself. I had always been interested in social justice but I never really knew what I could do with it.

Now that I have spent almost three years at CSU I realize the need for social justice is something that can't be ignored. I have encountered a lot of racially based injustice in the CSU community and I dream of one day eradicating it.

I want students to one day be valued for their individual contributions rather than just being helpful for admission's statistics.

I've continuously considered leaving CSU but I've now come to realize that my experience here is what drives my passions.

If I went to a Historically Black College or University, like initially planned, I would've never been exposed to the need for social justice, I would've never had to step outside of my "comfort zone" to explore my passions.

Over these few years I have grown from a confused freshman who just wanted a game plan and now have grown to a junior with plans to crash through glass ceilings and make great strides in social justice while helping those who need it the most.

## Where Do We Go?

### Danielle McConnell

In the city of Fort Collins there are very few things that college students can do, especially under the age of twenty-one.

After asking several of the upper-classmen that reside in this wonderful little town, and have been here for a few years now, a top ten list of recreational activities was put together.

When living here, one must come up with a greater perspective of what fun really means! It doesn't always have to be a party, and in this town, it normally isn't:

Centerra: Mall located right on the edge of Fort Collins. Considered Loveland area, but it is only about a twenty-minute drive.

This is also a great place to find clothing, seeing as how that oh so fabulous Foothills mall, is slowly dwindling away.

**Chipper's Lanes:** We are not all the greatest at bowling, I know I'm certainly not, but this was mentioned as a great way to just get out of the house.

If nothing else, gather some friends around and bowl with the bumpers!

Cinemark Movie Theatre: There is nothing wrong with keeping it simple and taking a trip to the movies, although in a college town, one wouldn't expect that this would be in the top five of

things to do, but hey, CSU makes fun out of any and everything!

Word to the wise, stay away from the Carmike movie theatre, it tends to have really dirty theatres and terrible slushies.

Algiers: Now for this place is for those of you that enjoy smoking hookah, Algiers is a hookah bar off of College and Laurel.

**It's a great place to relax with your friends and smoke if that's your thing,** if not you can still go and hang out, dance a little, or just get to know the incredibly friendly employees there.

Fort Fun: Now I have never actually been to Fort Fun but some tell me **it's a good place to go and let the little kid in you free.**

They have all types of entertaining games and rides. Pretty much whatever your heart desires, well, what the child in you desires anyway.

Club Octane: There were several differing opinions about this form of recreation, which is why it is seventh on the top ten lists.

However, I will say, that on a boring Wednesday night, when you have no homework to do, no book to read for **leisure, or your bed isn't calling your name,**

Octane is a good place to have a

little fun. It sometimes even allows you to just let loose and enjoy yourself.

City Park: This is a spot that few really know about but everyone should visit.

Maybe I am the only one that thinks that, seeing as how it is so low on the list, but I love the relaxation of Fort Collins, and this park is the perfect spot to do it.

Whether it is for a jog or to just enjoy the day, this is definitely the location to do it.

Bike Trails: These trails are located all over Fort Collins, and can be a really good way to get to know your way around town.

As well, they can also be great for exercise. So why not jump on that bike and take a trip through town, you might really enjoy yourself.

**Washington's Bar:** I have a hard time recommending this place, and I don't know how it made it to the list, but if you like the techno scene, this is definitely the place to go.

They also offer a wide variety of personalities, allowing for people to really get a taste of the Fort Collins atmosphere!

## EDITOR'S NOTES

### *Textbooks*

Danielle McConnell

So over the past few years at the beginning of the year, there is always that question of whether to buy books or to just simply leave it alone and keep all that money in your pocket. At least for me that battle exists. I have lost the battle every year, including this one.

My freshman year, I bought all my books thinking I would need them, read them, and be more successful with them. To an extent I was right, but I found that after purchasing all those books, I took back about half of them, long before book buyback.

That same year I went even further and bought some of the **study aides to breakdown those more "complex terms", those weren't** needed either, the professors do a fine job.

Sophomore year I tried a different approach, buying only the books that the professors told me to buy. I had better luck with that, but still ended up spending way too much money.

When I shared this with some of my upper classman friends, they informed me that they rarely bought books straight from the CSU bookstore, instead they got them online, or they borrowed them from friends, even spent time in the library, simply to avoid the extra costs.

The library could be your best bet because you have the book **you need, for free, and you're in the right setting to get some studying** done. Still the question persists, why can we not get affordable textbooks at our own bookstore?

I have come to the conclusion that this is absolutely ridiculous. We cannot get the textbook education we need without going that extra mile to save cost.

How is it that Colorado State University has the highest prices **for books of anywhere else around? Aren't students supposed to be well** equipped for their classes?

I guess this university wants us to be successful, but at a cost that none of us really can pull out of our pockets. The bottom line is, the most successful way to get the books you need is to look for them in every other arena possible except for the CSU bookstore! You can go there to get plenty of t-shirt and CSU paraphernalia, but then again, you may be able to find those same items elsewhere, also at a cheaper price!

**I probably shouldn't be saying this, but students have to look** out for each other, and we all know how expensive the college experience can get.

### *The Importance of Remembering Who You Are*

Brittany Sango

As I reflect on my past couple of years at CSU, I have come to realize and cherish how important it is to find myself. As many students know by now, college is tough. It is a completely different world **where responsibility is fully on myself, making me realize that it's time to** grow up.

To help with the transition into the college atmosphere, there are professors, mentors and advocacy offices that I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with. **But the most important thing I've** had to store at the forefront of my mind is never forgetting where I came from or who I am.

I admit my freshmen year was rough. The bell signaling the last five minutes to make it to class on time was absent, and cufew...well that was also a thing of the past.

I struggled with finding my identity as a woman, a person and a student. Instead of focusing on what was really important, like my education, I became absorbed in partying and ditching class. I thought I was on top of the world.

There was no doubt that CSU could become the place where I was no longer visible, where my goals were just another thing swept up. But here I stand today, a proud fifth year student, completing two majors and a minor.

Throughout the years, I have learned that being myself was the only thing that mattered because in the end, only I could really motivate myself to seek something better, something that my past generations fought so hard for me to have the opportunity to obtain. This was a better life.

I think that finding yourself is much like swimming. I was nervous the first time I tried swimming. My heart raced and I was more aware of the surrounding sounds.

**Just like I wasn't sure if I was going to make it to the other side of the pool, I wasn't sure if I was going to make it through college.**

**Now I'm on my last lap in the pool and I'm nearing the finish** line. But along with the five laps I have swam, I gained the knowledge of who I am as a person and a woman. My eyes are completely on the prize.

The bottom line to all students is that despite all the obstacles you face and the many more to come, you will get through it. Change can be a positive thing in redefining yourself in order to make it through.

Remember to believe in yourself, and take the time to establish who you are, because at the end of the day that is all that one can really reach for.

## Creative Corner

### *To You God*

Epikk

*I want to take out this time to Elaborate on this Angel You  
sent on earth...  
Places on this earth has no judges of humans beings but  
only by you...  
This angel is the worthy of Praise because that's what My  
name stands for...  
I see You in every Move she makes ...  
Her smile jus makes me want to look up in Heaven and  
thank You highly...  
I can only imagine how good it feels to have her wings  
camped around Me...  
Like Me getting on my knees praying for someone Like  
her...  
Grace is Thy Mercy and You sent Me what I wanted ...  
Allow Me to preach My words to her to let faith be made of  
Me having her ...  
I may not be Perfect, But With perfection of My words, I  
have perfected My mission of getting her...  
Please forgive Me in advance as sometimes Me and her  
will create sin ..  
Sin that will be as sweet as Her lips makes connection  
with mines ...  
But from there only time can tell how deep this sin can  
get...  
You make no negative judgment as she continues to walk  
this earth ..  
I want to birth something special in her ...  
No child as of now but that seed to show that there is  
someone out there...  
That has the bright glow in each footstep they take ...  
Who can prove that they are just as much of an Angel as  
she is ....  
That's if She can open her heart as Much as she open her  
eyes ...  
Because she is Blinking off on a opportunity ...  
That may never come by her way again ....  
So If you are putting you eyes on this piece ...  
Let your heart look along with you and discuss this ...  
And when You are Done Plotting ...  
I'll Be here ; waiting on both opinions  
Your heart and You Mind ...*



The next issue of the GRIOT will be published in October 2010.

If you would like to contribute to the GRIOT send articles, drawings, poems or short stories to [bss@lamar.colostate.edu](mailto:bss@lamar.colostate.edu)

Visit the Black/African American Cultural Center in 204 Lory Student Center.



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Office Hours: 8:00 am— 5:00 pm

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# October 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 United Men of Color 3-on-3 Tournament SOGLBT Drag show 7p.m.
10	11	12	13	14 United Women of Color Talent Show 7 p.m.	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30 GPS Session 3