

# The Burn Brown Book

a shady, abolitionist disorientation guide

## Acknowledgements

There are too many people to name that have contributed to the creation of this book! With that being said, we want to give gratitude to all those revolutionaries and healers and hackers and thinkers and organizers and writers and artists and *baddies* who have struggled before us. We stand on the shoulders of giants! We also want to give all of our love and strength to the folks who come to this work after us. You are doing great sweetie! And to the folks presently struggling against oppression, we want to give a reminder: it is only through camaraderie, solidarity, and coalition that we can unlock our fullest potentials. No one person can achieve what it is we're after. In the words of Mariame Kaba, "everything worthwhile is done with other people." And in the words of Onika Tanya Maraj, "[TO FREEDOM!](#)"

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## Welcome to Brown! Time 2 Destroy Her :)

### *The Sitch*

Hello to all of the girls, gays, queers, theys, and those that ID in other ways!

First and foremost, welcome <3 We're not sure why or how you got here, but you're here. It's normal to feel nervous, elated, overwhelmed, and - for some of our more politically active folks - maybe even a little excited. Many students decide to come to Brown because of its reputation for student activism and progressive politics. Maybe you were expecting to find that here too. You might have heard about the Slavery and Justice Report or the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan or the Brown Promise, and thought "Wow, Brown's doing some good shit!" These talking points are often used to bolster Brown's reputation as the "Liberal Ivy," but upon interrogation, it's clear that "Liberal Ivy" is nothing more than an oxymoron.

The more time that you spend on campus, the more that you'll begin to realize that not everything *is* as it's made to appear. You might be surprised to hear that the governing Board of the University is called the Brown Corporation and it's largely made up of CEOs, venture capitalists, and bank owners; that money has had a history of influencing everything on campus from sexual assault cases to student admissions; that 60% of folks on campus are a part of the top 10% and 20% are a part of the top 1%. The list goes on.

The tea really is, Brown University, like many other universities across the nation, is integral to the function of capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. In the table below, we've outlined some of the ways that Brown participates in the maintenance and upkeep of these oppressive systems.

<b>Brown's Narrative</b>	<b>Ulterior Motives &amp; Oppressive Behaviours</b>	<b>Alternative Practices</b>
<i>The things Brown says about itself. The stated ideals and philosophy of the university.</i>	<i>The covert, oppressive agenda that's hidden within Brown's stated aims and intentions.</i>	<i>Suggestions as to how we can rid the world of Brown's fuck shit.</i>
Brown's role in addressing inequity is creating space for	The <b>alienation</b> of marginalized people from their communities (i.e.	Build and maintain relationships with people from our own

<p>marginalized people at this university and empowering them with an education. If individuals from marginalized communities do well for themselves, their entire community will reap the benefits.</p>	<p>indoctrinating students with values that lead them to abandon the material and political interests of their communities); the production of <b>exceptionalism</b> narratives that make oppressive dynamics invisible. The presence and parading of token minorities is often done to mask larger structural inequities.</p>	<p>communities including the Providence community; destroy the imagined separation that exists between students “on the hill” and the people of Providence; refuse tokenhood and support the political work being done by and for marginalized people.</p>
<p>Brown is an <b>inclusive</b> institution! We have a <b>diverse</b> set of students, staff, and faculty, and we’re happy that they contribute to the university in such meaningful ways.</p>	<p>The <b>extraction</b> of labor and life from communities within and around the university (i.e. exploited labor, profiting from narratives of trauma, ongoing gentrification and refusing to pay property taxes, investment in companies that destroy the lives of working people all around the globe, etc.)</p>	<p>Provide reparations to Black and Indigenous communities (as well as the Providence community more broadly); end the university’s investment in the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, Palestinian oppression, etc; prevent further gentrification of Providence and yield control of the university’s capital plan/physical expansion to the Providence community.</p>
<p>Brown is a research institution and it is our goal to pursue knowledge and truth, an apolitical endeavor.</p>	<p>The <b>production of knowledge</b> that maintains an unjust social and economic order (i.e. research that supports the proliferation of oppressive technologies, gatekeeping the “marketplace of ideas,” etc.).</p>	<p>Pursue and disseminate knowledge in ways that benefit and uplift marginalized communities; embrace decolonial ways of knowing; boycott and deplatform when necessary.</p>
<p>Brown is a high-performance university and elite higher learning institution. Here you’ll find the best and</p>	<p>The <b>maintenance of castes</b> that include and exclude people from social and economic mobility (i.e. gatekeeping entry to the</p>	<p>Actualize a lottery or open admissions policy; reorganize the university’s budget and priorities until the financial needs of all</p>

the brightest!	university via an unjust admissions process, saddling students with debt, providing little-to-no protection from violence for marginalized people, etc.).	students can be met fully; create systems of accountability and support that cannot be influenced by money or clout.
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The above just scrapes the surface, but we hope it's illuminating. Now, the question remains: how do we move forward?

### *Moving Forward*

It's easy to become overwhelmed by - for lack of a better expression - the fuckery that Brown gets up to. But it's important that we stay vigilant, critical, and active. As students at this university, given all of the harm that Brown causes around the globe, it's imperative that we take on the responsibility of holding the University accountable and working toward its eventual destruction. Saying it again for the bitties in the back, *you have a responsibility to do something about Brown's fuckery now that you're here benefiting from it.*

The purpose of this disorientation guide is (1) to orient folks toward political goals and strategies with queer, decolonial, abolitionist potential (2) to share histories of organizing on campus as well as the institutional knowledge that has sprung from that organizing, and (3) to provide folks with tools to effectively organize against (and eventually abolish) the University. That said, we're not experts. We only have our experiences and what we've learned from those who have come before us.

Now without further ado, we invite you to peruse the contents of the guide - perhaps not all in one go - and then when you're ready, fuck shit up! Happy organizing <3

“Boo, you neoliberal!”

– Regina George



## Neocolonial Providence

Nonprofits, Brown, and the Company Town

By Servius G

Posted on March 17, 2014

*This is a working-draft of an intended longer piece which critically interrogates the spatial politics of Providence and explores the revolutionary potential of a radical urban social movement. My intent is to offer critiques of the ontological layout of urban space by investigating how power-relations currently transpire throughout the city so as to develop new methods and means of resistance and to be better able to strategize beyond manufactured limits of dissent. The central focus in this analytical piece is Brown University and the local the nonprofit industrial complex.*

Although coherently gathering my thoughts on Brown University and its parasitic neocolonial relationship to Providence has been an overwhelming process, it has also been therapeutic to finally lay out my observations on how Brown University's mechanisms of domination are carried out. For several months now I have felt ethically and politically paralyzed working through the difficulty of sharply articulating my critiques of the University.

It would be too easy to highlight the University's past with colonial Rhode Island as one initially founded by the Brown family, whose massive wealth was built on the backs of African slaves – cause everyone knows about that. What isn't so obvious is how in its modern incarnation it acts as an institution that maintains heavy economic and political influence over the city, state, and beyond.

I try to think – should I focus on the mafia-like network of Brown alumni that occupy various power-positions throughout the city-state? Or would I get my point across further if I focus on the institution's tendency of displacing entire communities by facilitating gentrification? Perhaps my argument would be better served if I concentrate on how the University manipulates the city's political terrain and functions to reproduce the local ruling class?

Ultimately, the avenue I choose to explicate Brown University's parasitic relationship with Providence has to reflect the way in which I initially came to notice the institution's processes of domination – and that's through focusing on the link between the University and the city's nonprofit industry.



My aim in the following analysis is to detail the ways in which Brown operates as a locus for the development and direction of various nonprofit organizations in Providence. In my analysis I'll describe how loose networks of Brown alumni heavily influence the city's political culture and how students from Brown tend to either dominate, divert, or pacify local social movement efforts through institutionalized-grassroots organizations.

The first task is to question the political ontology of Brown University as it exists within Providence's socio-spacial terrain. My critique will interrogate the University's underlying ideological structure and its function as a site for the reproduction of social relations.

I'll then shift into exploring the intricacies of the nonprofit industry and its ideological underpinnings. Next, I'll apply a critical analysis of the nonprofit industrial complex to investigate how the industry has manifested in a local context. Through that investigation, I'll detail the neocolonial relationship between Brown University, Providence's nonprofit industry, and the city's institutional-grassroots.

## **How Brown Rules**

### *Corporate Governance, Finance Capital, and Civil Cohesion*

To understand Brown University's power over Providence, we must first examine the structure and purpose of the school itself as a site of class reproduction and civil cohesion. Ivy League institutions, including Yale, Colombia, Harvard and the like, are influential not necessarily because of their athletics or academics, but rather for their utility in ensuring class cohesion of the country's capitalist elite and its beneficiaries. As John Trumbour noted in his critical text *How Harvard Rules*, these elite universities serve crucial functions for the ruling class. While Trumbour's assertions dealt mostly with Harvard Business School's role in training and recruiting students who go on to become powerful finance capitalists, using a critical genocidal analytic I aim to argue that Brown University serves a similar purpose of class reproduction by preparing its students to become maintenance-agents for the cohesion of white civil society and advanced global capitalism.

The structure of Brown University's administrative body has tremendous influence over how the university operates as well as manipulating the school's overall development and underlying ideological culture. Almost half of the members that make up the Corporation of Brown University's Board of Trustees hold occupations in global finance and other major economic industries.

In his essay titled “Industry and Empire in Crimson Cambridge,” Trumpdour speaks about U.S. capitalism’s “inner-group” – “the few members of the capitalist elite who hold numerous interlocking directorships in the Fortune 500 and the major [philanthropic] foundation and university governing boards.” As a prestigious knowledge-factory based in the city’s highest-income neighborhood of the East Side, Brown is not excluded from this reality. To verify this truth, let’s consider the Brown Corporation – the school’s central governing body.

Composed of mostly alumni, Trustee members include economic power players such as Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan, Goldman Sachs associate Andrea Terzi Baum, and TPG Capital COO Jerome Vascellaro. Another branch of administration within the Corporation is the Board of Fellows, which is comprised of eleven members including the school’s president. Finance capital is also well represented among the Fellows. Members include people such as Providence Equity founder Jonathan Nelson and Goldman Sachs managing director Richard Friedman.

The Brown Corporation is in charge of major aspects of the University. Its responsibilities include selecting the President; setting the budget, tuition, and fees; appointing senior administrative officers; establishing policy and strategic plan, among other bureaucratic tasks. Embedded in the operations of these rigid hierarchical structures are values that inform the ideological culture of the university.

Exploring how Brown University is governed is a crucial task if we truly want to understand how mechanisms of power operate within and beyond the University. In *How Harvard is Ruled*, Robert Weissman emphasizes the significance of governance structures on students, asserting that “the manner in which the University is run not only affects students’ education, but educates them as well.” He continues, “it teaches [students] that those who hold power are not, and should not be, held accountable – an important lesson both to those who will become the country’s leaders and to those who will be funnelled into the middle-class.”

### *Racial/Colonial Genocide and Class Reproduction at the Academy*

Dylan Rodriguez posits that the role of a school in a colonial genocidal order is to train students to find their place within white civil society and reproduce the violent social relations that uphold and maintain global capitalism. In the realm of the academy, the school acts as a factory that paradigmatically orders and exports bodies, embedding within them dehumanizing systemic logics and values using institutional techniques, rhetorics, and epistemologies of violence and power.

As part of the ideological state apparatus, Brown University's mission promotes philanthropic entrepreneurship and dedication to public service. At the core of these values are a set of ideologies that serve the functional interests of genocidal state structures. The neoliberal academy's institutional narrative of philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and public service masks the violent, teleological mythologies of liberal white humanism, multiculturalist democracy, and national progress, as Rodriguez suggests. For the sake of discourse, I'll refer to these guiding ethics and system logics as export-values.

During their tenure at Brown, students find themselves planted in a culture of power, prestige and elitism. No matter the mindset of the student as they enter the school, the university manages to embed within them a certain set of values and ideologies that they carry almost everywhere they go. These export-values, reified through curriculum, seep into the psyche of the student and shape how they operate in the spaces they occupy. This phenomenon is applicable not only to Brown – in fact, all students exit with export-values molded by the ideological culture of their sites of study.

The crucial role that schools play in forming capitalist social relations that maintain the current social order needs to be highlighted. Schools are believed to be sites meant for learning, personal exploration, and intellectual development. Though in actuality, the mechanized purpose of a school – especially in a neoliberal era – is to sort, stratify, and solidify the social position of incoming and outgoing students. Most students are aware that their purpose at any given university is to train for a future career and especially to develop one's social and professional network in hopes of finding employment after graduation.

Most Brown students are funneled into the managerial class throughout various industries, particularly the medical, education, public administration, and nonprofit sectors. These are the same sectors that employ large amounts of workers across Rhode Island. For this very reason it is imperative to analyze Brown University's function as an institution that exports bodies, values, and ideologies to uphold the pillars of white civil society and maintain a violent capitalist social order.

## **The Webs of Capital in a Company Town: Providence, Brown and the Nonprofit Industrial Complex**

### *Components of the industrial complex*

Similar to international non-governmental organizations [NGO's], nonprofits can take on varying forms to serve numerous functions. Moreover, nonprofit work resembles neocolonial missionary work in which missionaries [read: workers] are responsible for administering and delivering humanitarian aid [read: philanthropic capital] to those at the bottom rungs of white civil society.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore suggests that the nonprofit industry functions as a “third-sector” that has arisen due to the social abandonment caused by neoliberal market structures. To fill the void, the US has increased its dependence on philanthropic capital to attempt to selectively meet the needs of those in the throes of social abandon amidst a critical period of deepening austerity and neoliberal restructuring. Nonprofit organizations tend to provide a myriad of social services such as youth programs, job training programs, violence prevention programs, housing services, and domestic violence services.

Further interrogation would bring us closer to a more critical understanding of the role nonprofits play in fulfilling the neocolonial desires of white, owning-class elites. Funded largely by grants coming from philanthropic foundations, individual donors, or government agencies, nonprofit organizations typically maintain a heavy reliance on funding from sources outside of the communities they operate in. The funds from philanthropic capital, such as the Ford, Rockefeller, and Mellon foundations, often come with restricting ties that end up dictating the form and content of the services nonprofits deliver.

Sternly specific funding rubrics and structural prohibitions informed by the legal structure of nonprofits situate organizations in a position where they are bestowed the responsibility to deliver direct services to those “in need” as identified by finance-philanthropist coffers.

Although dependence on philanthropic funding is one way in which nonprofits fall into the machinations of neoliberal state-apparatuses, another way is by professionalizing “good work” and creating a specialized career-path for people who want to become nonprofit managers. What is more, nonprofit work now demands a certain set of specialized skills necessary to operate and maintain the mission of the organization contributing to the careerist culture of the industry.

Andrea Smith mentions nonprofit workers spend “inordinate amounts of time writing proposals, designing programs to meet foundation guidelines, tracking and evaluating programs to satisfy foundations, or soliciting private donations through direct-mail appeals, house parties, benefits, and other fundraising techniques.”

The combination of specialized skill-sets and the professionalization of nonprofit work has a troubling effect on grassroots movements. As more grassroots leftist groups become institutionalized into the nonprofit industry, movement-building work becomes substituted for nonprofit work mired in careerism – where the focus is maintaining the mission of the organization instead of building collective power within communities with the liberatory potential to challenge antagonistic social hierarchies.

This insidious element of the nonprofit industry creates a certain dynamic where people are stratified into positions that reinforce and maintain the need for the services nonprofits deliver rather than legitimately addressing the root causes of those needs. As Andrea Smith posits, “The existence of these jobs serves to convince people that tremendous inequalities of wealth are natural and inevitable.”

Each of these enmeshing characteristics – dependence on foundation funding, specialization of nonprofit work, proximity to state apparatuses, etc – contribute to what can be called the “nonprofit industrial complex,” or NPIC.

#### *NPIC and the buffer zone strategy*

Dylan Rodriguez defines the NPIC as “the set of symbiotic relationships that link together political and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including and especially progressive and leftist social movements, since about the mid-1970’s.”

In a post-COINTELPRO era, the particular problematic with the nonprofit industry is the way organizations are utilized by ruling-class elites to surveil, subvert, pacify, and neutralize potentially-radical social movements on the grassroots level.

One of the ways the ruling-class accomplishes this objective is by deploying the “buffer-zone strategy.” The buffer zone strategy refers to a mechanism for stratifying people into a number of occupations that carry out the agenda of the ruling class.

To understand how the buffer zone strategy operates in practice we have to consider the structural composition of social hierarchies in a globalized neoliberal economy, which can be thought of as an intricate set of stratified power relations based on systems of domination and subjugation. Andrea Smith offers a comprehensive instrument for thinking of political and economic power, describing US’ current political/economic structure as a pyramid.

“In the United States, 1 percent of the population controls about 47 percent of the net financial wealth, and the next 19 percent of the population controls another 44 percent. That leaves 80 percent of the population with just 9 percent of the remaining financial wealth.”

While this snapshot is not definitive in describing the intricacies of power relations in the US, it does help us understand the vast differences in social and economic inequality. The top 1% make up the elite, owning-class; the next 19% make up the professional/managerial classes; and the bottom 80% is made up of middle and working-class peoples, in addition to those impoverished due to unemployment, homelessness, and the like.

Smith continues, “The result is that large numbers of people in the United States spend most of our time trying to get enough money to feed, house, clothe, and otherwise support ourselves and our families, and many end up without adequate housing food, health care, work, or educational opportunities.”

The buffer zone is a stratification strategy for the ruling class to maintain a degree of separation between themselves and those on the lower end of the pyramid. To avoid becoming the objects of people’s anger, elites have utilized “legal, educational, and professional systems to create a network of occupation, careers, and professions to deal directly with the rest of the population.”

There are three primary functions of this buffer zone. The first is taking care of people located at the bottom of the power pyramid. The second to keep hope alive by distributing opportunities for a few people to become better off financially. And the third function of jobs in the buffer zone is to maintain the system by controlling those who want to make changes.

We can easily locate the NPIC within this portrait. Nonprofits act as organizations that recruit buffer zone agents from the groups of people demanding change of the system. The strategy works as parasitic process of co-optation that integrates the leadership of our communities into the bureaucracies of the buffer zone, separating the interests of those leaders from the needs of the community.

In this sense, the nonprofit industry works as a missionary project that carries out the neocolonial desires of white, financial elites. Though, there’s still the question – how do the dynamics of such a project manifest within a particular locality? In thinking of spatial

politics, power relations, and systems of domination, it is critical to investigate the intricacies of how nonprofits operate in the political-economy of an urban city.

### *Providence's nonprofit industry*

To get a full picture of Providence's current political economy, we must focus in on the sprawling nonprofit industry that has developed in the city throughout the past several decades. By no means an outlier to global trends, the proliferation of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island is still astounding. Rhode Island ranks 8th among states that have the highest number of nonprofit organizations per capita.

With 47.2 501(c)(3) organizations per 10,000 people, nonprofits employ more than 18 percent of Rhode Island's labor force, tying us with New York as the states with the highest percentage of people working at nonprofits. This includes hospitals, universities, social service agencies, etc. Among the largest employers in the state, one of the most notable "nonprofit" enterprises is Brown University.

As a political and economic entity, Brown University needs to be viewed as an institution that maintains and exerts a great level of power over the city. Legally listed as a nonprofit agency whose asset worth is \$4.2 billion, the Ivy League school plays no minor role in influencing how power in Providence operates. Brown and its alums have, for decades, been major actors in shaping the political, social, and territorial landscape of the city for decades.

It's no secret nor surprise that a sizable litter of lawyers, lobbyists, congressmen, bankers, public administrators, and real estate developers throughout Rhode Island all call Brown their alma mater.

But also indicative of Brown University's heavy influence, is the city's grassroots organizing realm along with the institutional-left. As a hotbed for idealistic activist-minded students, the University has played a major role in exporting bodies who have gone on to build the skeletal structure of Providence's local nonprofit industry.

### *Stuffing the buffer zone*

I have already gone to great lengths to illustrate Brown University's role as a school that trains students to find their place within white civil society and reproduce the violent social relations that uphold and maintain global capitalism. In local context, the University acts as a funnel to export students and alumni into buffer zone occupations –

effectively rendering them into missionaries that are enabled to act on embedded neocolonial logics of philanthropy and social service.

Incorporated into the bureaucracies of the buffer zone, Brown students and alumni through nonprofit work have strongly shaped the cultural and political landscape in the city for more than 15 years. Strongly resembling neocolonial missionary work, the University lauds nonprofit work as a career path in which students can specialize and develop their skills and expertise in. True to its mission, the University dedicates whole centers and programs – such as the Swearer Center for Public Service – to connecting students to community organizations throughout the city and state along with other mechanisms (Teach for America, Americorps VISTA, etc.) that act as feeder-tubes into buffer zone occupations.

A significant number of grassroots, community, labor, and youth development orgs active in the city today have been started by Brown students in their activist phases and since then have been administered by the same ilk. Those not directly founded by Brown alumni, were founded by alumni of other Ivy League schools and maintain close institutional relationships with those from Brown.

One only need to dig into historical archives to find that numerous influential nonprofit organizations have consistently been initiated, led, or administered by Ivy League students and alumni: Providence Student Union, the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, Rhode Island Communities for Justice, Rhode Island Urban Debate League – and still the list continues.

Even left-oriented radical “social justice” grassroots organizations aren’t immune from this trend: Direct Action for Rights and Equality, Providence Youth Student Movement, Olneyville Neighborhood Association, and Rhode Island Jobs with Justice have all been founded by Brown students.

These institutional-grassroots nonprofit organizations in particular act as incubators within an activist sub-culture and function as a social net to catch eager, idealistic students wanting to dip their toes into local organizing work. They hear about such and such organization from a friend who knew a friend, volunteer the luxury of their time, land an internship, or sometimes even establish a staff position for themselves.

The confluence of funneling patterns, interplay of social networks, and dependency on volunteer labor and philanthropic-funding serve to uphold the pillars of white civil society by reproducing and maintaining parasitic social relationships. As community work



becomes nonprofit work through processes of co-optation, grassroots efforts get subsumed into the machinations of the nonprofit industrial complex, binding organizations to function as managers of community dissent thus derailing any potential for legitimate resistance.

In subsequent posts I'll be aiming to tease out critical questions for developing new methods and means of resistance outside of the NPIC in the city. My goal is to contribute towards thoughts for untethering local community and labor struggles from parasitic neocolonial institutions.

### **STEPS TOWARDS DISMANTLING BROWN UNIVERSITY:**

- Plan and organize a general insurrection to expropriate all resources, especially land, belonging to the University**
- Abolish the Brown Corporation, Department of Public Safety, and all formal administrative bodies of the University**
- Institute open-admissions and free tuition for Rhode Island residents and all descendants of former enslaved peoples across the hemisphere**

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Sources that influenced this analytical piece:

- Racial/Colonial Genocide and the “Neoliberal Academy”: In Excess of a Problematic, Dylan Rodriguez
- The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
- How Harvard Rules: Reason in the Service of Empire, edited by John Trumbour
- Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution, David Harvey
- Discussions with close compas impacted by Brown University and the non-profit industrial complex

## Thoughts on Neocolonial Providence

by Sani Scott

Brown is not unique. It is part of a larger collective of Higher-Ed institutions that asserts itself in and displaces communities – namely communities of color. I am so glad Servius G brings this to light in their pointed analytical piece, *Neocolonial Providence*.

I believe it is a necessary read and should be circulated widely among the Brown community.

As a scholar who is a Black woman, I initially contentions with the piece – not for its content, but because I felt targeted for even being affiliated with Brown. So, like most people would, I deflected my guilt.

I am not proud of this, but I took personal offense to Servius' critiques and neglected to fully acknowledge the structural issues they highlight in this piece. It was upon reading *Neocolonial Providence* for a second time at the urging of a co-researcher that I was able to begin the process of reconciling my Brown privilege with my marginalized identities.

Here's a word of advice if you find yourself getting all in your feelings and defensive like I did:

Despite your social/critical consciousness, advocacy and activism at Brown, you are complicit in maintaining neocolonial Providence.

Don't deny that. So if you are truly “‘bout it ‘bout it,” dedicate your time here to dismantling the master's house with the master's tools. Interpret that as you will. That's how I choose to make up for being complicit.

Well, that's me thinking out loud. Bravo to the author for writing such a thought-provoking piece.

Onward and Upward,  
Sani Scott

“Somebody wrote in the Burn Brown book that I’m lying about being a part of the proletariat, but I can’t help it if I’m a bootlicking economist that works at the US Federal Reserve and put profit over the lives of students and community members during a pandemic!”

– Christina Paxson



“If they don’t have any education, then, they’re nowhere. You dig what I’m saying? You nowhere. Because you don’t even know why they doing what they doing. You be, you might get caught up in the emotionalist, uh, you understand me? You might, you know, you done caught up, and caught being poor, and they want something. And then, if they’re not educated, they’ll want more, and before you know it, they’ll be capitalist, and before you know it we’d have Negro imperialists.”

– Fred Hampton

“We can not fight for our rights and our history as well as future until we are armed with weapons of criticism and dedicated consciousness.”

– Edward W. Said

## **(Re)Distribution Requirements**

A Guide to Institutional Fundraising at Brown University

Compiled by Tali Ginsburg 2018.5

### **Sneak Peak // Navigation**

Part 1: Context, Positionality, and Abolition:

Why fundraising?

Why at Brown?

The money trail/mapping the corporation

The Master's Tools?

What now?

Part 2: Fundraising Strategies:

Strategy 1: Event planning on campus

Tips, Tricks, and Budgets

Strategy 2: Using student groups

Strategy 3: Grants, aka \$\$ with no strings

Tips, Tricks, and Buzzwords

Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Final guidelines and parting thoughts

Sources and highly recommended readings

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This is a zine about institutional fundraising, specifically at Brown University, because that's the place I'm writing from. I'm also writing from the position of being white, class privileged, queer, transmasculine/non-binary, Jewish, and able-bodied, if not always able-minded. I want to start with that because that's where I start and where I stand.

I also come from a family of academic achievers. I was taught from a young age that universities were benevolent institutions outside of other systems. In the offices where I played, it seemed knowledge was magically made the same way my dad's job as a professor magically made money. His job enabled me to go to the University of Chicago's elite feeder high school, which gave me a gateway to admission to the Ivy League. Today, I take up space at an institution that both was and wasn't built for me, but certainly operates in my benefit now.

This zine comes from my own experiences with institutional fundraising, and some of the Brown-specific tips and tricks I've been taught along the way. It is limited in all the ways you might expect it to be limited, and probably even a few more. But I hope it's helpful in thinking through one way to leverage the specific type of privilege that comes from being a student at an institution like Brown. There's a million other ways—I like

this one because it's tangible, it's in my lane, and it works through time-sensitive access to a wild amount of resources.

The BIGGEST THANKS and credit to Bethlehem Desta, who not only came up with the idea behind this zine and edited every word, but has also been my fundraising buddy and inspiration every step along the way. Biggest thanks also to Professor Elena Shih, for making everything (and I mean everything) happen.

“Criticality is the seeing of the window and the frame and the smudges on the glass, as well as the landscape, cityscape, or humanscape outside the window. Criticality is the seeing of our own seeing, accounting for our own position, stance, perspective, history, infrastructure, substructure. Criticality is not optional.” – The Antena Collaborative, “A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing”

## **Why Fundraising?**

First, let's get this out of the way: fundraising IS activism. Sometimes our image of activism is only megaphones and marches. But those megaphones cost money, and most important work happens behind the scenes anyway. This is especially true for folks with any kind or kinds of privilege, where being invisible and helpful is just that - helpful. Fundraising is an easy way to be materially supportive and accountable to the movements happening all around us.

Fundraising is also one form of redistribution. And redistribution is exactly where people with class and/or education privilege are usefully positioned to be, precisely because of our access to wealthy networks and institutions. If we're honest about where we are and what access we have, we can work quietly towards redistribution without centering ourselves or alerting the institution. And easily move tens of thousands of dollars along the way.

In *The Reorder of Things*, Roderick Ferguson proposes that the University operates in a triad with capital and the state. In other words, the university is not neutral, and in fact enables and perpetuates the violence of settler-colonialism and systems of racial capitalism. At 38 colleges across the country, including Brown, more students come from the top 1% than from the bottom 60% of the income scale. A lot of redistribution needs to happen in higher education.

## **Why at Brown?**

Because of ongoing settler colonialism- Brown is built on stolen Wampanoag-Narragansett land. Indigenous land struggles continue in and around the

University. The Pokanoket encampment at the start of the 2017 school year demonstrated that, in the words of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “decolonization is not a metaphor.”

Because Brown was built by slaves. BROWN WAS BUILT BY SLAVES, and is named after a slave owner. Approximately thirty members of the first Brown Corporation owned or captained slave ships. Brown resides in a state officially known as Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations, and from here, at least 2/3rds of North American slave-trading voyages launched each year. Brown has not paid reparations.

Because Brown is a force of gentrification in Providence. Having actively displaced a Cape Verdean community in Fox Point. Brown continues to displace people in the Jewelry District (currently being rebranded as the “Knowledge District”) and beyond.

Because 38% of Brown’s property is tax exempt as a non-profit. Brown is also the largest landowner in Rhode Island, so the property tax exemption built into its charter has enormous effects on the local tax base. Brown also dominates the city’s non-profit sector in other ways, such as by placing its graduates in administrative roles across the state and serving as a resource gatekeeper.

Because Brown reproduces class structures through a combination of educational elitism and strong ties to capital. More than half of the members that make up the Corporation of Brown University’s Board of Trustees hold occupations in global finance and other major economic industries.

## The Money Trail//Mapping the Corporation

In 2017, Brown’s endowment was about 3.5 billion dollars. But their total assets are closer to 5 billion.

### BROWN UNIVERSITY

#### Balance Sheets

June 30, 2016 and 2015

(Dollars in thousands)

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 72,414	51,188
Accounts receivable and other assets	55,386	45,610
Contributions receivable, net	170,904	161,786
Notes receivable, net	31,188	31,972
Funds held in trust by others	75,055	68,253
Investments	3,530,605	3,709,288
Land, buildings and equipment, net	1,064,631	1,064,105
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,183</b>	<b>5,132,202</b>



## What is the Brown Corporation anyway?

The authority and responsibilities of the Brown Corporation are set out in the 1764 Charter. The Corporation selects the president, sets the budget, tuition and fees, establishes policies and strategic plans, appoints faculty and senior administrative officers, and accept gifts and naming opportunities. The full corporation meets just three times a year. During the rest of the year, many of them are connecting to other corporations and making sure business as usual continues across the world. Most of them are graduates of Brown (marked by class year).

## The Brown Corporation

\*\*\* Power map of university \*\*\*

## The Master's Tools?

Audre Lorde: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."

Antena: "The master's house began to collapse on its own long ago. Use any and all tools you can get your hands on and speed the process. Demolish the master's house carefully enough to recycle the building materials and make tiny houses for everybody. With any leftover materials, we'll make small books."

Resource Redistribution guide at Williams College: "You can't use the master's tools. But you can use the master's money."

So let's operate from the premise that the institution as we know it needs to be abolished. **What now?**

For me, this is where fundraising comes in. Single handedly, I can't dismantle this university (collectively we can, but still it's very difficult). I can't on my own significantly shift the power dynamic between Brown and Providence, or make the corporation divest from Israel or fossil fuels, or open up free admission to descendants of the enslaved people who built this hill.

What I can do is organize and fundraise. I sometimes think the University is a set of scales tipped so far in the direction of injustice it doesn't even look like scales anymore. But there are little bits of resources I can move to the other side. No, it won't bring down the institution. But it will, even in the tiniest of tiny ways, tip the scales.

Students have four years of access, give or take. After four years, you can't apply to UFunds grants, or get batKEYs (more on those later), and the university really no longer cares about you at all unless you're a donor. Students are mistreated by the University all the time. But we also have immense power because the university is ~technically~

accountable to us, many of us have some spare time, and we have access to so much that is denied to the rest of Providence.

NOTE: Some of the following strategies are 100% legit, some of them are more sketchy. Do whatever you feel comfortable with. All of these take time, which is why it's especially important for students with class privilege to take these on.

NOTE: Talking about money can be uncomfortable. Asking for money can be uncomfortable. Remember that what is a huge amount of money to an individual or a grassroots organization is literally pocket change to a University with a \$3.46 billion endowment. You can be shameless.

## **Strategy 1: Event planning on campus**

This is probably the easiest way to fundraise. The event itself really doesn't matter too much, so long as you are getting money to people with marginalized identities//groups that are led by those directly affected by injustice.

Fundraising for events:

- University Grants- These are posted through UFunds and can give you a huge boost towards making an event happen. Ex: Community Building Fund (up to \$5000).
- Academic Departments- the Watson institute requires a form but for everywhere else if you send them an email they will throw a few hundred dollars at you just to make you go away. Having a template email describing the event and asking directly for financial support will usually get you between \$100-\$750. Ex: AMST, ENVIS, VISA, MCM, etc.
- Centers on campus- like departments, just an email is enough to get you a few hundred dollars, with the exception of the CSREA, who require a co-sponsorship request through their website. Keep in mind that centers and departments that give you money become co-sponsors and usually have their own stipulations about being included in advertising, etc. Ex: CSSJ, Pembroke, BCSC, SDWC, LGBTQ Center, etc.
- Administrative offices- Places like the office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of Campus Life have unexpected funding pools you can pull from. Extra points for using buzzwords in your email pitch.
- Having a job as an on campus programmer is also a great (and paid) way to access and leverage funding for events. Just be really intentional about your positionality when applying to these- if you don't experience intersectional oppression, probably don't apply.
- Residential Life and RPLs - RPLs are given programming budgets for their units, but most of the money doesn't get used, which means you can often get quite a lot of unaccountable money for events (provided you submit the proper paperwork).

### **Generic event planning checklist. Have you:**

- Made a budget? (see next page)
- Found an institutional home to consolidate funds, e.g. a department (with a BatKEY) or student group (SAO account)?
- Set up the event?
  - o Make sure the spaces you reserve are accessible. You can reserve spaces on campus 25Live: <https://25live.collegenet.com/brown/>
  - o You can order food through the Student Activities Office webpage, under Financial Services > Conducting Transactions > Food and Brown Dining services. To order from an outside vendor (recommended) go to <https://dining.brown.edu/brown-first-outside-vendors/>.
  - o Be in communication with all the the people participating in or setting up the event about logistics and their needs.
- Advertised?
  - o Make a facebook event and add everyone.
  - o Make a list of every vaguely relevant center, department, DUG, student group, listserv, class, newsmidia, facebook page, etc. Emails are best directed to a specific person and from someone with a personal connection, but a cold email will do in a pinch. If a center has a newsletter, they often have a place on their website where you can submit a blurb about your event.
  - o To submit to Today@Brown, go to <https://today.brown.edu/> and navigate to Submit Items.
  - o Featured Events is a listing which the University distributes to news outlets across RI/southeastern MA. To have your event distributed, you first have to add the event to <http://events.brown.edu/>. Then email [featured\\_events@brown.edu](mailto:featured_events@brown.edu). Make sure to include a time, date, place, sponsor information, contact person and a brief description in your submission.
  - o If you're advertising to groups outside of Brown, make sure you are reaching out sensitively and centering those groups in the space you create.

### **Tips, Tricks, and Budgets**

Event Name:				
PI:				
Date and Time:				
Venue:				
<b>FUNDING</b>				
		Contact	Pledged/Estimated	Received/Actual
Cosponsor #1:				
Cosponsor #2:				
Cosponsor #3:				
Cosponsor #4:				
Cosponsor #5:				
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>			0.00	\$0.00
<b>EXPENSES*</b>				
Honoraria				
Travel (air, rail)				
Ground trans/Travel meals PD				
Lodging x # of nights				
Food/Meals:	Breakfast (est. cost x # of people x days)			
Food/Meals:	Lunch (est. cost x # of people x days)			
Food/Meals:	Reception (est. cost x # of people, see University list of preferred vendors for estimates)			
Food/Meals:	Dinner (est. cost x # of people x days)			
Publicity/flyers/posters				
Audio/Visual				
Videography				
Facilities*				
Supplies				
Student Workers				
Other:	Contingency = 10% of all non-fixed expenses		0.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>			0.00	\$0.00
<Shortfall> / Overage			0.00	\$0.00

Tip: You can fundraise extra by adding unnecessary things to a budget. Overestimate all costs, add extra honoraria, and make up line items like videography or materials, then funnel this money out through other “expenses” or honoraria to someone who has agreed to distribute it.

Ex: We fundraised almost \$8000 to bring CeCe McDonald to Brown in April 2018. \$5500 went directly to her, and another \$500 went to LGBT books for prisoners through an honoraria donated by Ren-yo Hwang, the Q&A moderator.

## Strategy 2: Using student groups

\* Another key way to get money off campus is through SAO funding for student groups. If you're part of a student group, you can fundraise for off campus events and have departments, centers, and offices transfer money into your account (they don't give you the account number, so you have to connect the funder to the SAO office). Then you can use that money for anything really. You can even start new real or fake student groups for this. Go to <https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/events/student-activities/>.

\* It's a little harder to get money for events off campus, but if you can argue that it makes the institution look good or benefits students, some of the on-campus event tips will still work. For example, you can usually fundraise for transportation to a protest if you argue that it's an educational experience for students. It's a harder sell, but still very doable if you come as a student group.

\* Reimbursements are key, so keep all receipts and be creative in what you charge to the University. This is true for student groups, but also of things like individual travel grants. For example, if you get into conferences, the university will pay for your travel and you can find creative ways to get extra things reimbursed.

In Spring 2018, we fundraised almost \$2000 for buses to get students to a Coalition of Immokalee Workers Boycott Wendy's protest in NYC by getting departments to put money in the Student Labor Alliance account, then having SLA donate it to a youcaring.org page.

### **Strategy 3: Grants, aka \$\$ with no strings**

There are a ton of sources of fundraising on campus that have zero accountability for what you do with the money. Some examples include:

- \$ Brown Arts Initiative (up to \$1000)
- \$ Research @ Brown (up to \$500)
- \$ Explore/Expand Grants (up to \$500)
- \$ Jobs where you log hours through workday (log a set amount of extra hours and commit to giving it away at the end of the semester—this requires a chill boss, and works especially well with TA jobs)
- \$ Random competitions and events Brown puts on for “social good,” like BSA Inspire Week or the Swearer Center Social Innovation Fellowship. You can pretend to innovate while really giving this money to the people already doing the work, or you can actually come up with a project you feel good about.

The projects you propose can be real or not. Regardless, make sure the money goes OUT of the institution and to organizations or people in the community who are doing radical work (or just who need it).

A friend and I are using the Social Innovation Fellowship to make a Queer/Trans porn podcast and pay sex workers/erotica writers and performers. You can capitalize on things like pinkwashing or greenwashing at certain moments, just be aware that the university is using you as much as you are using them.

### **Tips, Tricks, and Buzzwords**

One of the ways students have access isn't just through proximity to capital. It's also through proximity to markers of class, even if we don't come from moneyed

backgrounds. This means we know the kind of language the University wants to hear. Fundraising is all about making whatever it is sound like it will benefit the institution and/or the students. It might make you want to vomit, but buzzwords can help here. Words like:

intersectionality	Diversity and inclusion
student engagement	campus dialogue
marginalized identities	new student partnerships
new community partnerships	leadership
opening possibilities	social justice
building community	new synergies
diverse array	engaged scholarship
innovation/social innovation	service
equity	entrepreneurship

“To make us strangers in a place we thought was home. To find spaces for listening inside strangeness.” – The Antena Collaborative, A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing

## **Tips, Tricks, and Hacks**

### **UFUNDS**

Brown regularly posts all the money things you can apply for on this website. All of this money is going to be given out anyway, so it might as well go to you and you might as well funnel it somewhere good! Apply to everything that is remotely related to anything, except for things that are explicitly for low-income students if you're not a low-income student. Once you've done a few, you can plug and chug and churn these out pretty fast. This is also where research \$\$ is given out, which you can use to pay people for interviews (regardless of whether you actually interview them or not).

### **PRINTING**

Brown students get a printing allotment that we usually can't use up. If you're involved in local organizations, printing things is a huge help. If you run out of money, there's also free printers in the UEL, the GeoChem computer lab (password geology), and probably

a few other places I don't know of. Brown Design Workshop and the Multimedia Lab offer short trainings that can also give you access to laser printing, fine art printing (which gives you an extra \$150 printing budget), and more.

## STRUCTURAL POSITIONS

Take one for the team. Apply to the University Resource Committee in the office of the Provost, the Undergraduate Finance Board, anywhere else where money is controlled. Open up what you can, where you can.

## CONCENTRATIONS

If your concentration is housed within Watson, you can get bank for anything. Milk that for all it's worth. But wherever you are, get to know your department. Concentrations like American and Ethnic Studies tend to have professors who will help out, but keep in mind that professors of color and especially women of color are also often overburdened by the institution with both mentorship and political work.

## WHISPER NETWORK

This is great to find professors who might be down to help you out with a departmental code where you can consolidate fundraising for events (also known as a batKEY). The whisper network is also just great for ideas of what to fundraise for and how- are there organizations or movements your friends are involved with that need money?

## PARTIES!

Fundraising can also be fun, like throwing basement parties and charging admission. Just make sure it's sliding scale accessible and don't assume every student has money/comes from wealth. Also, have intentionality statements around your party having zero tolerance for racism, sexism, xenophobia, etc. You can also party plan using the Safe OUTside the System Safe Party Toolkit created by the Audre Lorde Project: <http://bit.ly/SafePartyToolkit>. There's also a zine: <http://bit.ly/SafePartyToolkitZine>!

## Final guidelines and parting thoughts

**Security:** If you're talking about redistribution, or embezzlement, or planning anything really, talk over signal. Signal is an encrypted messaging app so your messages can't be tracked. Also, have a non-Brown email you can use so the corporation can't watch you.

**Accountability:** Be clear and transparent about your capacity- it's much better to say no than to ignore things because you are too stressed to deal with them (we've all been there). Always stay accountable to who and what you are fundraising for. This means

being in relationship. This means not demanding people use the money in any particular way. This means listening, listening, listening.

**Community:** Nothing happens alone. Be intentional about reaching out to the right people from the beginning and stay in touch- this means relevant student groups and people you might not already know. Give people ownership over projects that affect them, but be careful not to tokenize people you assume would be interested. Make sure that groups and spaces are socially open to new people, and constantly challenge dynamics within groups of anti-blackness, sexism, cissexism, classism, ableism, colorism, etc.

**Sustainability:** Share knowledge and pool skills! Record information so you can pass it along and the same lessons don't have to be learned over and over again. Build community. Write together, throw parties together, put on events together, share other ways of taking money from the institution with each other so we can spread like a swarm of bees and annoy the university with all our many tiny stings.

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And most importantly, Bethlehem Desta's brilliance, and so many other friends who have taught me so much along the way.

## Redistribution brainstorm//workspace

*Who can you think of who might want to get some \$\$ from Brown? Do you already have a relationship with that person/organization?*

*Do you have any relationships with people in the institution who might be helpful, e.g. faculty in a relevant department, people who work at centers, administrators?*

*What is posted in UFunds right now that you could use to fundraise?*

*What is your capacity?*

## Hijacking the University

There are a ton of institutional channels that students can take advantage of to secure decision-making power, access to information, programming budgets, personal salaries, etc. Infiltrate and exploit these institutional channels, and do your best to insert transformative and radical politics in as many ways as you can.

**RPLs (MPCs, WPCs, RPCs, CAs)** - upperclassmen that live in Residence Halls who provide support for students living in their halls. The equivalent of most schools' RA positions. *The Residential Life program is the only program that ALL undergraduates at Brown experience.*

- Decent programming budgets.
- Email rosters of first-year residents - valuable for sending mass email blasts to large segments of the student body.<sup>1</sup>
- RPLs play a significant role in orientation, especially when it comes to the "Engaging Diversity" and "Culture of Consent" sessions. These are two of the only presentations that (theoretically) every Brown student will see. Thus, these sessions are great opportunities for disseminating important information and shifting campus culture.

**Student Government** - the Undergraduate Council of Students (UCS) is a body of students (elected and non-elected) that are meant to liaise between the student body and Administration.

- Select members of UCS interface regularly with senior administrators.
- UCS is relatively well-equipped to generate institutional support for student projects.
- Membership and voting power are relatively easy to ascertain in UCS.
- UCS oversees the appointment of students to a number of important advisory boards and committees.
- Other student government bodies include the Graduate Student Council (GSC) and the Medical Student Senate (MSS).

**GISPs** - GISPs (Group Independent Study Projects) are essentially classes that are created and actualized by students! GISPs (as well as other kinds of independent study projects like DISPs, GLISPs, etc.) are proposed to and approved by the Curricular Resource Center.

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<sup>1</sup> The MPC cohort should have access to all freshman emails. If rosters are pooled and collected year-to-year, folks in the program could create a listserv of most of the students that go to Brown.

- A great way to get academic credit for doing archival and investigative work.
- Depending on your faculty sponsor, GISPs can be a lot less stress than regular classes.
- This disorientation guide is the result of a GISP!

**Formation of Academic Departments, Concentrations, and Tracks** - academic departments house a set of faculty that teach and do research related to a particular discipline (i.e. American Studies, Political Science, Urban Studies). Historically, there has been some success in advocating for the existence of new departments. One of the most famous examples is a strike led by the Third World Liberation Front in 1968, which led to the establishment of an Ethnic Studies department at San Francisco State University. In 1968, students at Brown staged a year-long protest for an Ethnic Studies Department and were only granted a concentration in 1996. Concentrations and tracks within concentrations are options available for a student's academic focus.

- Forming new academic departments...
  - creates an institutional entity that will outlive student turnover. (This is only really helpful if the folks who became a part of the department are trustworthy and have decent politics.)
  - obligates the university to dedicate resources to work taking place in said department. This creates the possibility of pushing transformative/radical research agendas.
  - creates salaried positions that tend to go to certain demographics of people. For example, if a trans studies department were to be created, it's likely that many of the faculty that would be hired and paid would be trans.
  - can increase the variety of anti-oppressive course offerings (e.g. Palestinian Liberation and Anti-Imperialism, We Demand: Histories of Student Activism, How Brown Works).
- Concentrations and tracks...
  - create opportunities for students to receive credit for research and study in specific fields of interest (e.g. an Abolitionist Studies concentration or a trans studies track within the Gender and Sexuality Studies concentration). See the Timeline of Student Environmental Activism to learn more about the formation of the Environment and Inequality Track!

**Hiring Committees** - ad hoc committees charged with filling available positions at the university. Hiring committees typically consist of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. (Alumni might also be included depending on the position.)

- Allows students to advocate for applicants with radical politics as well as applicants who are from underrepresented groups (ideally both)!

**Advisory Boards and Committees** - while the purpose and makeup of these committees can vary, they're often composed of a mix of students, staff, and faculty and are charged with providing reports or recommendations to certain offices or individuals regarding specific topics. Examples include the Advisory Committee on Corporate Responsibility in Investment Policy (ACCRIP), the BCSC Student Advisory Board (SAB), the Brown University Community Council (BUCC), the University Resources Committee (URC), and the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice.

- While this will depend on their charge, these committees often have a significant impact on the creation, maintenance, and alteration of policy at the university.
- Some of the information that is disclosed during the meetings is private, which means that you can (and should) make it **not private**. Access to private information is often valuable for political organizing and can be leveraged in the interest of transformative and radical politics. Further, while an individual's right to privacy is an important facet of ensuring one's safety, health, and wellbeing, policies of privacy implemented by the university are often no more than a bureaucratic attempt to protect the interests of the university - not its constituents or stakeholders at the margins.
- Regardless of the composition of the committee, members of the committee can (threaten to) publish vetoes<sup>2</sup> of the committee's decisions in the BDH (or other relevant publication) so that the Brown community is aware that the committee is ignoring student voices.

**BUDS** - BUDS (short for Brown Undergraduate Dining Services). Folks employed by BUDS work in the dining halls at Brown.

- You can claim reparations by liberating food for you or other folks who may be facing food insecurity (including folks who don't attend the university). Just kidding... stealing isn't cool. It's worth noting that this is only worthwhile if workers' wages aren't impacted.

**Student Groups** - organizations on campus that convene around some common purpose, interest, or activity. They can have varying affiliations and relationships to the university. For example, official undergraduate groups must be registered as such with UCS.

- Clout. Becoming a part of the E-board within certain organizations means that you can play a significant role in the direction of the organization and the ways

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<sup>2</sup> A veto is an op-ed or statement from members of a committee that invalidates and delegitimizes the committee's official actions.

that it engages issues of social and economic justice. This is especially true for organizations that are perceived as speaking for an entire community.

- Access to UFB money (category 1 groups get no money, category 2 groups get \$200 baseline funding, and category 3 groups get \$200 baseline funding and the ability to submit budget requests).

**Programmers @ Student Centers** - student positions that involve planning events on campus with budgets that are provided by the relevant centers (i.e. LGBTQ Center Program Coordinator, Sarah Doyle Center Program Coordinator).

- Can re-direct money to marginalized folks in the Providence community through honorariums.
- Can use programming budgets to push radical political agendas.
- Can bring folks to campus that can develop the knowledge and skills of students, staff, and faculty.

**Orientation Program Coordinator Positions** - orientation programs are programs that students take part in at the beginning of their time at Brown. Often students are responsible for coordinating said programs.

- Recruitment! You can encourage students to participate in student groups that are doing important work.
- Orientation is a space where freshmen are first introduced to campus culture. Thus, depending on the information you provide and the politics you present as “normal,” campus culture can be shifted in ways that benefit political discourse, student relationships, and organizing culture. For example, during Mosaic+, an emphasis could be placed on how computer science can be used to assist political organizing.

**Teaching Assistants** - many of the classes that Brown offers have Teaching Assistants (or TAs) who are available to provide extra support or instruction for the students in the class.

- TAs have the opportunity to insert radical politics into the classroom in a number of ways: making announcements about important events or actions on campus and in the Providence community, highlighting student groups doing important political work, altering course content, challenging harmful language or stereotypes, facilitating the creation of study groups for marginalized students, and providing support for marginalized students in the classroom.
- In the spirit of free information, TAs might also have access to banks of current and/or previous course material that they can post online so that folks who don't

have access to post-secondary education can continue to educate themselves freely.

- If large actions or demonstrations take place, TAs can often be supportive by offering notes, alternatively-located office hours/TA help sessions, etc.

**Grants, Grants, Grants** - grants are sums of money that the university provides to members of the community for a range of academic, social, and creative endeavors. Many of the grants that the university offers can be found on U-Funds.

- The money is often unaccountable.
- See Tali's guide to institutional fundraising at Brown for more info!

**Subscriptions, Rentals, and Building Access** - there are so many different resources that we have access to at Brown, and in general, we don't use most of them. By giving folks who don't attend Brown your online login information or ID card, you can help to distribute unused resources to folks in Providence who can put them to good use!

- Examples: [free software](#), [academic database subscriptions](#), [library access](#), tools and machinery at the [Brown Design Workshop \(BDW\)](#), multimedia technology and software at the [Multimedia Labs \(MML\)](#), tech equipment rentals (e.g. laptops, cameras, projectors, speakers, etc.) at the [IT Service Center](#), [HBO Go](#) (which can be accessed off campus, where Philo cannot), printing.
- In the interest of the freedom of information and education, you can download and redistribute course content and/or otherwise expensive academic writing to folks who wouldn't normally be able to afford it.
- Two-factor authentication can present a problem for folks who are using your Banner username and password to access different online resources, but you are actually able to [generate a set of permanent backup codes](#) that can be entered instead of requiring two-factor.

Depending on your creativity and willingness, any student position on campus (paid or unpaid) can provide some amount of institutional power. Other positions available on campus include department assistants, student callers for the Advancement Office, tour guides, team captains, etc. Think about new and creative ways that you might be able to leverage these positions and the ones listed above.

“One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”

– Martin Luther King Jr.

“The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”

– Audre Lorde



## **Navigating the academic left as a critical student:**

Brown is known for its open curriculum and its progressive values, and it's true that many professors on campus – in Africana Studies, Ethnic Studies, American Studies, and so on – are doing work that is transformative and perhaps even revolutionary. If the university is a place where power accrues through knowledge production, then there must also be a way to redistribute power radically through those same practices of study and teaching.

In their book *The Undercommons*, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten write: "It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can." In this guide we hope to highlight the university's material conditions, as a capitalist institution funded by local exploitation and student debt, but we also want to think about how we can take advantage of the university as fundamentally a place of study and teaching (even as we sow the seeds of its abolition).

The essay that follows, an argument for critical Muslim studies, demonstrates how students might use the power and credibility they access through Brown to build towards decolonial knowledge production, and what that knowledge means for communities in struggle. We invite folks to think about the ways that the introduction of a department like critical Muslim studies might be understood within a framework of the hijacking and infiltrating of the university.

## **Critical University Studies: Pushing for Decolonial Disciplines Within Western Academia**

*An Argument for Critical Muslim Studies By Amara Majeed*

*This argument for Critical Muslim Studies discipline within Western academia, specifically, in the pre-existing field of American Studies, is part of my broader vision for Critical University Studies--to posit, within Western academia, decolonial disciplines that unsettle white, liberal, secularism as normative. Such seemingly disparate disciplines can intersect and coalesce in unique ways, cultivating solidarity that extends far beyond the confines of the academy. This introduces my argument of not only pushing for Critical Muslim Studies within Western academia under the discipline of American Studies, but also, to push for Critical Hawai'iian Studies within this same discipline. The*

*importance of the former is prefaced by Muslims as a people afflicted by the American imperial project. Given that Hawai'ians are a prime example of a people affected by this same empire, and that Critical Hawai'ian Studies is an emergent disciple, my push to integrate and bolster both Critical Muslim Studies and Critical Hawai'ian Studies into the American Studies field seeks to challenge American empire and to center the scholarship of and reclaim the narratives of indigenous peoples and the victims of the American imperial project. In the broader endeavor of Critical University Studies, this argument seeks to promote critical, decolonial projects within Western academia, and to create solidarity amongst such projects, in the service of achieving our collective liberation.*

Upon coming to Brown, I was quite keen to critically understand and engage with my identity as a Muslim through academia. I understood Brown to be an epicenter of decolonial thought and deconstructive thinking that displaced secularism as the default understanding of the world; because of this, I was extremely eager to take such courses that would allow me to develop a framework that challenged dominant Western paradigms. However, upon taking courses on Islam and Muslims here, I have come away very dissatisfied. I have found that secularism is not deconstructed as the primary modality through which Islam and Muslims are understood. As a result, this plays into Islamophobic and Orientalist tropes about Muslims, and leaves Muslim students feeling undermined and discriminated against in the classroom setting. Upon bringing these concerns to faculty members, I was belittled, and was castigated as though I was attempting to impose an conservative, Orthodox Islamic agenda in a way that was both dogmatic and anti-intellectual. In contradistinction, my argument was absolutely constructed with an intellectual framework: I was building upon ideas of past decolonial scholars, such as Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood, to argue that the way that Islam and Muslims are approached at Brown, or, more precisely, the Western, secular, liberal academic institution--is Westoxified, and fails to deconstruct secularism in understanding these subjects.

Feeling completely dissatisfied and dejected, I decided to take advantage of Brown's institutional support of independent intellectual pursuits in the service of challenging this normative paradigm of approaching Islam and Muslims in Western academia. As a result, I designed and taught a Brown-accredited course on the life of Prophet Muhammad. In addition to critically studying his biography, this course investigated how Muslim societies over time have reconfigured his lifetime in constructing what is normatively and uncritically considered "Islamic." This course took an anti-colonial approach and displaced normative secular frameworks, analyzed lived Islam in a way that challenged the Orientalist gaze, and nevertheless grappled with difficult issues of patriarchy, anti-blackness, and slavery in Islamic history

and contemporary lived Islam. Ultimately, this course was majorly successful: not only did it provide similarly frustrated Muslim students with a course that problematized dominant paradigms, but also, it served as a modality of resistance for many of these students during a time that blatant Islamophobia was normalized in the wake of Trump's victory. Upon realizing what this course meant for Muslim students, as well as the type of decolonial scholars and scholarship that I believed could be generated by approaching Islam and Muslims in this way, I decided to continue to create and teach accredited courses on these subjects.

I ultimately designed two more courses: one explores a particular strand of Islamic jurisprudential thought, and investigates reasons that Muslim societies have canonized particular forms of Islamic legal orthodoxy. The other course investigates intimacies between mass incarceration of black Muslims in the U.S. and the imperial imprisonment of Muslims in Guantanamo, and draws conclusions about cartographies of U.S. power. This includes a component of prison visitations with a black Muslim prison chaplain. The works of Sohail Daulatzai will be used as a framework for this course. I eventually designed an Islamic Studies degree that included the courses that I designed, in addition to decolonial methodological courses that I had taken during my time at Brown. Lastly, I began petitioning the university administration to hire more Muslim faculty to teach about Islam, to minimize Orientalist and Islamophobic biases that may result from someone without the background. I hope that these combined efforts--creating and teaching classes on Islam and Muslims, designing and popularizing an Islamic Studies degree, and hiring more Muslim faculty--will plant the seeds for an Islamic Studies department at Brown that revolutionizes the way Islam and Muslims are approached at the Western, secular, liberal institution. I am coordinating with underclassmen on continuing these efforts upon my graduation.

At this point, I have provided some rather personal background as to why I, a future Muslim scholar with a specialization in a decolonial approach to Islam and Muslims, have a vested interest in the emergence, development, and success of a discipline that promotes a decolonial understanding Islam and Muslims in the way that I have previously alluded to. The purpose of this work is to make an argument for a field of Critical Muslim Studies in Western academia, specifically in the discipline of American Studies. The importance of this is prefaced by Muslims as a people afflicted by the American imperial project. Given that Hawai'ians are a prime example of a people affected by this same empire, and that Critical Hawai'ian Studies is an emergent discipline, my push to integrate and bolster both Critical Muslim Studies and Critical Hawai'ian Studies into the American Studies field seeks to challenge American empire and to center the scholarship of and reclaim the narratives of indigenous peoples and the victims of the American imperial project. As this is simply an introduction, I will provide a brief summary and exploration of this broader argument, while investigating

certain intimacies between the field of Critical Indigenous Studies and Critical Muslim Studies. This latter investigation, which will elucidate how Critical Indigenous Studies, specifically Critical Hawai'ian Studies, has influenced me in my intended development of the field of Critical Muslim Studies, will allow me to construct a foundation that reconceptualizes cross-disciplinary practices of resistance and resurgence in the Western academy in a way that draws upon the indigenous futuristic concept of the existence of a plurality of worlds.

For the past two semesters, I took two courses taught by Professor Mary Baker on Critical Hawai'ian/ Critical Indigenous Studies. I certainly did not expect any inspiration for the development of Critical Muslim Studies: I was simply taking it to fulfill a concentration requirement. However, unbeknownst to me at the time, I would come to be so profoundly moved by a prolific tradition in which humility, generosity, and compassion are central--a stark contrast to norms in Western academia, an enterprise in which structures of colonialism blatantly pervade. The course was decolonial in every respect--it was taught by an indigenous Hawai'ian woman, centered indigenous voices in the class, integrated Hawai'ian language into the course, placed importance on decolonial Hawai'ian scholarship, and emphasized narrative and personal experiences.<sup>3</sup> What I found to be curious, however, is the decision to house a course that is so revolutionary in nature within Western academia. I now understand this as an effort to reclaim a narrative, a history, a land--to assert, unapologetically, what is rightfully one's own, but in a way that is precisely and extraordinarily indigenous: using frameworks of *kuleana*, or indigenous conceptions of rights and responsibilities, rather than attempting to destroy this master's house with the master's tools, so to speak. This phenomenon of decolonial practices intentionally operating within a Westoxified framework, to my understanding, is precisely the tension that Mary Baker elucidates in the end of "Waiwai (Abundance) and Indigenous Futures." When a woman offers Baker \$20 for the vegetables she is taking home at the end of the day's harvest at the community garden, Professor Baker refuses, saying that Ho'oulu 'Aina doesn't take money for vegetables. However, the volunteer next to her accepts the money as a donation (29). This seemingly simple anecdote is deeply meaningful: it represents an unsettling of transactional, capitalistic norms that exploit land and labor--yet, the acceptance of the donation serves as an acknowledgement that we do live in such a society, and that financial capital given out of someone's own accord can be used to advance this project. This is a microcosmic example of an indigenous future residing within a Westoxified framework; it is powerful, it is possible, and it serves a particular purpose. For me, this approach, which, admittedly, took me the entire duration of the year to

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<sup>3</sup> This seems to be a hallmark in decolonial Hawai'ian scholarship that we have read over the duration of this course.

grasp, is both beautiful and uplifting, and has inspired me in my own pursuits in my intended development of the field of Critical Muslim Studies. Throughout this paper, which serves as an exploration of and argument for Critical Muslim Studies, I will integrate important elements of Critical Indigenous Studies that have inspired me in the development of my field. It is crucial to acknowledge that the very structure of this paper, which places a strong emphasis on narrative and sincerely acknowledges people, scholarship, frameworks, and land that have inspired us or helped us along our journeys--is profoundly indigenous in nature. I am deeply humbled to draw upon a beautiful and powerful tradition of indigenous knowledge and scholarship in crafting this paper.

In this next section, I would like to briefly provide background and historical information regarding the field of Critical Muslim Studies as it currently stands. I then introduce some of the ways in which I hope to advance this field with my own developments. Critical Muslim Studies is not particularly prominent, and certainly underdeveloped. The sole individual attributed to the title is Salman Sayyid, a professor of social theory and decolonial thought at the University of Leeds in Australia. He worked to develop this field through international conferences, symposia, workshops, and finally, by launching an interdisciplinary peer reviewed academic journal entitled ReOrient. The journal is quite new, and has very few publications. In an article entitled "ReOrient: A Forum for Critical Muslim Studies," the editorial board of ReOrient defines Critical Muslim Studies as (1) a critique of Eurocentrism understood through a number of different modalities--such as epistemologically, culturally, geopolitically (2) a suspicion of positivism (3) an embrace of postcolonial and decolonial thinking. Critical Muslim Studies seeks to "...denaturalize the historiographies, ideologies, and teleologies that are normalized, produced, and enabled by unquestioned protocols of knowledge formation" (8). This field, which is further described as a "series of epistemological orientations" (8), is clearly intended to provide students with a critical, decolonial framework in understanding the work around them and unsettling normative frameworks.

As a potential pioneer in this field, I would like to further develop this approach of conceptualizing Critical Muslim Studies as a *process*, as opposed to an *essence*. This entails providing students a methodological unsettling of normative frameworks of morality and power. Works of a multitude of decolonial scholars will be central to this endeavor, perhaps most pertinently Faisal Devji's *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics*. This is a prime text in engaging with this methodology that I am describing, and would be one of many seminal texts in the Critical Muslim Studies Field. In this piece, Devji examines the terrorist not as a malevolent force seeking to violate so-called Western values of freedom and liberation, but as precisely the paragon of these Western values. Constructing frameworks utilizing works such as

these will allow me to propose a methodology that completely inverts normative understandings of values that are quintessentially American. This exposes my intention behind the field of Critical Muslim Studies in seeking to invite students to place value not only on learning, but in *unlearning* entrenched ideals of what is considered moral and normative, and further, grapple with *whom these normative frameworks serve to benefit*. This centrality of unlearning, and more broadly, methodology, is in part inspired by the emphasis on learning in ways that are more exploratory than definitive (20), as enshrined in Daniel Heath Justice's "A Better World Becoming: Placing Critical Indigenous Studies." Heath explains that such an approach promotes a sense of humility with regards to knowledge: an affirmation of the concept that the more we know, the more we realize how much we don't know. This is posited as a stark contrast to the idealization of mastery of concepts inherent in the Western academic vision. Mastery, Heath affirms, is reflective of white supremacist, colonial structures being represented in the Western academy, given that "only the imperialist feels entitled to claim belonging in all places at all times" (26). The emphasis upon methodology in Critical Muslim Studies is intended to promote a lifelong journey of unsettling normative frameworks posited by the Western, specifically American, imperial and settler colonial empire. To expand, this journey is intended to exist and flourish far beyond the classroom or the duration of the degree--thereby implicitly eliminating the possibility of mastery.

Next, I would like to explore another essential element of my vision for a Critical Muslim Studies field, which is, once again, greatly inspired by Heath's postulations in the field of Critical Indigenous Studies. This is that the development of an approach that is *characteristically Islamic*. Now, this is quite a provocative statement, and a proper explanation cannot be given in such a brief introduction to an argumentation. However, in future expansions of this argument, I hope to use works, including those of Shahab Ahmed, in particular *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic*, to explain precisely what I mean by an approach being characteristically Islamic. However, in the spirit of an explorative, as opposed to a definitive approach, as is characteristic of Critical Indigenous Studies, I will contend that part of the methodology of the Critical Muslim Studies field is to together grapple with, and deconstruct and reconstruct our epistemologies of an infinite number of categories, including that which is characteristically Islamic. Once again, it is a disservice to attempt to explain this phenomenon in this introduction, but I intend to return to this in an expanded argumentation. Moving away from such a polemical subject, through Critical Muslim Studies, I would like to place a focus on Muslim peoples' use of Islam as the precise modality in achieving liberation. This liberation can take a number of forms; in this case, I am referring to liberation in the political sense. Understanding this Islamic praxis of liberation, or Islamic liberation theology, is central in unsettling Westoxified notions of

savior complexes towards Muslim peoples that use exploitative frameworks of capitalism, imperialism, and settler-colonialism to “liberate.”<sup>4</sup>

An Islamic liberative praxis, drawing from a tradition of *kuleana*, seeks to derive its inspiration from the Qur’an and the difficulties faced by the historical lineage of prophets, working towards “ongoing theological reflection for ever-increasing liberative praxis” (Demichelis 130). Farid Esack cultivated such a liberative praxis with a basis in justice-oriented interpretations of the Qur’an, specific to the context of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The successful deployment of this particular liberative praxis, Esack explains, can be recognized by results such as liberation from exploitation, a greater level of respect for human dignity, and withdrawals from illegal military occupation and economic imperialism (Demichelis 144). A key element in this particular Islamic liberative praxis includes a Qur’anic hermeneutic of liberation, employed to interpret and reinterpret certain Islamic concepts in ways that suit a liberative agenda in a particular socio-historical context. In other words, this is a “conscious decision to search for meaning...responding creatively to the suffering of the *mustad’afun* and holds out the promise for liberation and justice” (Demichelis 135). As an example, the term *kafir* is normatively used in the Qur’an to refer to disbelievers or non-Muslim enemies of Islam. In the manifestation of Islamic liberation theology in the South African context, however, this original conception of *kafir* is nullified, and instead solely used to refer to the apartheid regime and its supporters, irregardless of their religious affinities (Demichelis 131). For example, in an appeal to boycott the sanction-busting New Zealand rugby tour in 1988, these Islamic liberationists claimed, “...he is not a Muslim who goes to mosque on a Friday and to racial sport on Saturday” (Demichelis 134). This represents a critical departure from what has historically been understood to be a non-Muslim, and a newfound definition that is specifically in the service of the anti-apartheid movement. In rationalizing such a departure from normative understandings of important elements of Islam, Demichelis claims that “all theological categories, no matter how authentic they are, have usually been the product of ideology, history and political reflections” (Demichelis 133). This use of independent interpretation is understood to be representative of a “revolutionary spirit of a religion in contrast with fatalism and dogmatic authoritarianism in faith” (Demichelis 139).

A goal I have for this proposal of Critical Muslim Studies would be to deeply investigate this use of Islam, by Muslim peoples across various socio-historical contexts, as a modality of liberation, while simultaneously unravelling the concept of returning to Islam as a liberatory praxis as producing an essentialization, or a “True Islam” that is in the service of creating structures of authority and garnering greater

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<sup>4</sup> Needless to note, this is not liberation, and simply in the service of the Western colonial expansionist project.

legitimacy to one's interpretation of Islamic doctrine. In discussing the aforementioned reinterpretations of normative understandings of important elements of Islam, Demichelis claims that Qur'anic text has always been the "battlefield for attempts to support a specific truth in strict connection with an explicit historical period" (Demichelis 133). Allow me to further explicate this subtle yet crucial point. Despite Esack's positioning of *ijtihad*, or independent interpretation as a "revolutionary spirit," in stark contrast to the "fatalism and dogmatic authoritarianism in faith" (Demichelis 133), it is important to recognize that Islamic liberationists are also imposing a type of dogmatism and a claim to what Islam *really* is. This is not to undermine an Islamic liberation theology in itself; in contradistinction, I personally understand it to be a decolonial modality of resistance used by Muslim peoples in the wake of various forms of oppression. However, in line spirit of this explorative, as opposed to definitive or prescriptive approach, I hope to raise questions surrounding notions of "True Islam," and the construction of religious legitimacy and subsequent structures of authority that this produces. What this translates to more broadly is an intention for this disciple to provide students with a critical framework that deeply investigates decolonial frameworks and acknowledges severe injustices that cause the emergence of such frameworks, while simultaneously being critical about claims to decoloniality and possible attempts to counteract a broader praxis of liberation. Once again, the aims of the discipline should coalesce to provide students with a critical framework in unsettling any dominant paradigm, even those that claim a decolonial liberative praxis. This focus on methodology is, as aforementioned, in contradistinction to simply providing a wealth of prescriptive knowledge on any given topic, which is emblematic of the colonial idealization of mastery.

As can be gleaned from the immense integration of the Critical Indigenous Studies tradition into my vision for Critical Muslim Studies, my vision of this field is not one that circumscribes the realm of decolonial thought to the sphere of Islam and Muslims, but rather, one that infuses and credits decolonial scholars of Critical Indigenous Studies, Africana Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, South Asian Studies, amongst various other disciplines. While acknowledging, respecting, and crediting the uniqueness of each of these fields, I hope to develop a strong sense of solidarity and coalition-building amongst critical decolonial scholars within Western academia, particularly within American studies--to sketch a cohesive yet beautifully complicated narrative of the global archipelago of American power, and in doing so, make a collective, yet individually unique, claim to the discipline of American Studies. This is the movement I see as essential to Critical University Studies-- creating decolonial fields in various areas that unsettle white, liberal, secularism as normative, and building solidarity between these fields. This represents a fundamental challenge and reorienting of the Western academy. I hope that together, scholars from these disparate



yet intimately linked disciplines can represent and respect the following concept described by Heath: “When you are a guest in someone’s home, that’s the center of the world” (26). Implementationally, I understand this as respecting the various epistemologies that we come from, understanding the disparateness of our spheres, yet working to discover interconnectedness in the service of reclaiming respective yet collective narratives, histories, and lands from the imperial and settler-colonial empire. In doing this, perhaps we can tap into concepts enshrined in praxes of indigenous futures: particularly, the envisioning of a future in which many worlds fit (29), as is stated in Mary Baker’s “Waiwai (Abundance) and Indigenous Futures.” To draw from a concept from a theory of futurism specific to the Islamic tradition, I will end this section with this: *InshaAllah*.

To conclude this introduction, I would like to make several notes. I hope that in the development of the field of Critical Muslim Studies, pioneers continually grapple with a myriad of matters, including but not limited to: the role of non-Muslims within the field, how this interacts with the implicit goal of centering Muslim scholarship, and issues that arise when attempting to circumscribe the boundaries of who a Muslim is and what Islam constitutes of—I have briefly alluded to the latter previously. I hope that all possible contentions, debates, and intellectual endeavors within this field are premised by our collective intentionality in striving *fi sabil Allah*. I hope that, in our pursuit of knowledge and truth, we supplicate to our Lord to increase us in knowledge [Al-Quran 20:144] and to continually remember that only He is the Truth, the Possessor of Knowledge, the Reality of all Realities. Finally, as aforementioned, in drawing upon an indigenous, specifically Hawi’ian, scholastic tradition that acknowledges people, scholarship, frameworks, and land that have inspired us or helped us along our journeys—I wish to acknowledge my roots. In addition to my foremost teachers, including but not limited to our beloved Messenger, Prophet Muhammad, and my mother and father, I am humbled to be from a lineage of brilliant, powerful decolonial scholars that have influenced my own epistemological frameworks and ontological engagements with the world beyond words.

I am a student of Dr. Anila Daulatzai.

I am a student of Dr. Mary Baker.

I am a student of Dr. Rajeev Kadambi.

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## Power Mapping

By Sara Van Horn and Samy Amkieh

For a power map of the university and its governance, click [here](#).

Now, welcome to the career fair! Our intent is not to vilify individuals but to highlight how systems of oppressive economic and state power are intimately connected to and through Brown. We believe the incredible harm that Brown corporation members perpetrate should be common knowledge—not because we are concerned with individual morality, but because this knowledge helps to expose Brown’s integral role within global military capitalism.

We have chosen to highlight only a handful of the most egregious reflections of global power within the Brown Corporation. We have also emphasized industries that attract a high percentage of Brown students both to suggest a connection between Corporation members and the industries that claim graduates and to remind ourselves of the ways that we, as students, become involved in industries that often produce harm.

- **FINANCIAL/BANKING, REAL ESTATE, and INSURANCE:** 15% of undergraduates
  - Richard Friedman
    - Head of Merchant Banking Division and sits on the Management Committee of **Goldman Sachs**. Chairs the bank’s Investment Committee and Real Estate Principal Investment Committee. Friedman Hall and the Friedman Study Center owe him their names.
  - Brian T. Moynihan
    - CEO of **Bank of America**, called a “Top Corporate Tax Dodger” by Senator Bernie Sanders for Bank of America’s ZERO DOLLARS in federal income tax in 2010 while getting a \$1.9 billion tax refund. They made \$4.4 *billion* in profits that year (and they love tax havens)!
  - Jim Yong Kim
    - President of the **World Bank** (2012-2019) - which is tied to human rights [abuses](#) around the world as well as imperialist and exploitative practices of money lending.
  - Christina Paxson
    - President of the Brown Corporation and the deputy chair of the **Federal Reserve Bank of Boston**. She doesn’t care what students think or vote for (Brown Divest, Black Walk 50). When questioned about the links between Brown and Safariland (a tear gas manufacturer), Paxson replied, ‘But...they’ve used tear gas in Germany to put down groups of Neo-Nazis,’ not caring that the same tear gas has also been used at the

southern border, in Ferguson, and in Palestine. She is the Queen of Normalizing Violence.

- **TECHNOLOGY:** 15% of undergraduates
  - George S. Barrett
    - (2005) CEO and President of the North American branch of Israeli multinational **Teva Pharmaceuticals**. (2008) Vice Chairman, owner of ½ million shares, and CEO of Healthcare Supply Chain Services of **Cardinal Health, Inc** which delivered massive opioid shipments to West Virginia and hugely contributed to the opioid crisis for which Barrett [apologized](#) to Congress in 2018.
  - Maria T. Zuber
    - Vice President of Research at MIT but guess where she also works? She's on the executive board of **Textron**, a defence contractor based right here in Providence that makes tools of destruction and oppression for militaries around the world!
- **RETAIL**<sup>5</sup>
  - Thomas J. Tisch
    - On Board of Directors for department store chain **Sears** which filed for bankruptcy in 2018, laying off tens of thousands of workers while [awarding](#) \$25 million in bonuses to executives.
- **COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA:** 5% of undergraduates
  - Bernadette Aulestia
    - Executive VP of global distribution for HBO. Brown students get free HBO, **only** on Brown's campus, leaving students with no way to access the Game of Thrones finale. Not the type of harm we are investigating but still...

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<sup>5</sup> While the retail industry is not an industry that attracts a high percentage of Brown students, Brown still exerts incredible power over those with minimum wage jobs.

## Admissions ☕

tea • noun • /tē/

- a. “the best kind of gossip, typically shared between friends. it’s a bonding tool for people of all ages. tea is usually about someone you know, but can also extend to celebrities, random internet scandals, etc.” - urban dictionary



### **b. the truth, bitch!**

WikiLeaks revealing Paxson providing “special handling” of admissions applications suggested by the Corporation	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1oM_Gw8_nhTp9GxGHIDMYFADUWL4aGzLK">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1oM_Gw8_nhTp9GxGHIDMYFADUWL4aGzLK</a>
WikiLeaks showing Michael Lynton donating \$250,000 to ensure his child's acceptance	<a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1e1hisE4VK2QsJa_hawuZ8eOX9jKPvzN5">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1e1hisE4VK2QsJa_hawuZ8eOX9jKPvzN5</a>
Luke Weill admitting that he wasn’t required to complete academic obligations at Brown because he was rich	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IVrH0bYBnbjODqWdvpKBD_soZh6rS-zs/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IVrH0bYBnbjODqWdvpKBD_soZh6rS-zs/view?usp=sharing</a>
Committee reviewing admissions process made up entirely of people with a vested interest in an unfair admissions process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1kYrBGd2jtWuub0WuOT2yJDJi148cO8tv">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1kYrBGd2jtWuub0WuOT2yJDJi148cO8tv</a></li> <li>2. <a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q5T1zairygxM30LQk-l6idVTBOQ6uNw8">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q5T1zairygxM30LQk-l6idVTBOQ6uNw8</a></li> </ol>
Articles demonstrating Brown’s destructive impact on the Providence Public School District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEEq64YYVsALvf2Fi6NKsyg0XGhircZz/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEEq64YYVsALvf2Fi6NKsyg0XGhircZz/view?usp=sharing</a></li> <li>2. <a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1h0d5hwWslJQ14obunb3t9tvpMSHTKf0b">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1h0d5hwWslJQ14obunb3t9tvpMSHTKf0b</a></li> <li>3. <a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZVOCQRfoODqN77kFIQSc0gd45ASqY-vP">https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZVOCQRfoODqN77kFIQSc0gd45ASqY-vP</a></li> </ol>
Brown’s horrendous class and race demographic breakdown	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/brown-university">https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/brown-university</a></li> <li>2. <a href="https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-diversity/dashboard">https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-diversity/dashboard</a></li> <li>3. <a href="https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-research/factbook/enrollment">https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-research/factbook/enrollment</a></li> </ol>

**Advocate a lottery admissions process! Fuck this tokenistic prestige BS!**

(For a fun mood board, click [here](#).)

## A Timeline of Student Activism @ Brown University

This timeline and its most recent additions have been crowd-sourced. Some things are bound to be missing or incomplete or incorrect, so please feel free to make edits or comments [here](#)!

And if you want to learn more, here are some resources & archives that are worth checking out:

- [Disability History at Brown](#)
- [Student Environmental Activism Timeline](#)
- [BDH: Oral history of student activism since the 1980s](#)
- [Third World History at Brown](#)
- [Remembering Race at Brown](#)
- [\(Re\)Imagining Brown 250+](#)
- [Slavery and Justice Archives](#)
- [Blacks at Brown Timeline](#)

Year	Action
1764	Brown University is founded as the College of Rhode Island; 3rd in America and 7th in Colonial America.
1769	Brown's first class commencement is celebrated just as war looms.
1773	Students form a committee against the Corporation because the food they were promised is not being provided.
1775	The American Revolutionary War begins.
1778	Students petition the Corporation, in response to a change in Commencement policy, to be allowed to sit on the graduation stage like all the classes before them.
1835	21 students refuse their diplomas at graduation for the assignment of Commencement Parts which they felt created competition amongst students - Commencement Parts were a performance of public acts to demonstrate their educational accomplishments.
1851	Students petition to hold meetings during the evening. In protest to the petition's rejection, students attend evening lectures given by professors in what was later called the "Rebellion of 1851". The President denounces the breaking of University policy and three professors resign.

1861	The Civil War begins.
1888	First master's degrees are granted to graduate candidates.
1889	First doctoral degrees are granted to doctoral candidates.
1891	The Women's College is founded.
1933	The Brown Daily Herald is accused of treason for its "War Against War" intercollegiate pacifism movement. The Herald's work is quickly endorsed by many other college newspapers.
1964	The University establishes a partnership with Tougaloo College
1967	<p>The Afro-American Society is founded.</p> <p>Students and faculty protest CIA recruitment on campus. An <a href="#">audio recording</a> of the protest can be found in the library.</p>
1968	<p>65 Black students from Pembroke and Brown College walk out of class and march to the Congdon St. Baptist Church and remain there for 3 days in protest of racist admission practices. After student and administration negotiations, there is a 300% increase in black student enrolment as well as the establishment of the Transitional Summer Program (later renamed TWTP).</p> <p>Administration and faculty decide on educational changes as students and advocates lobby for New Curriculum, ultimately approving it in 1969.</p>
1969	Student and faculty protest against the Vietnam War participation turns to focus on the University's support of the Reserve Officer Training Corps; some students believe ROTC programs show support for the conflict in Vietnam while others believe the military values to be incompatible with the values of a liberal arts education. The faculty vote to phase out the ROTC.
1970	<p>1500 students strike to protest Kent State shootings and US entrance into Cambodia. Faculty meets and passes a resolution to send President Nixon and Rhode Island congressmen to ask them to stop the Vietnam War.</p> <p>Rites and Reason Theatre is founded. The first director is George Houston Bass (1938-1990), who is also the executor of Langston Hughes' estate.</p>

	Asian American Student Association is formed.
1971	<p>The Women's College and Brown College merge into Brown University and Pembroke Campus.</p> <p>The MPC program established.</p>
1972	<p>The Afro-American Society is renamed the Organization of United African Peoples (OUAP).</p> <p>Third World student protests ask the University to recommit to the demands of the 1968 walkout.</p>
1973	<p>The Minority Peer Counseling (MPC) Program is created by African American students at Brown. By the 1980s, students from African, Latino, Asian, Native American, and multiracial descent are involved in the program. Arab Americans are added to the constituent list in 1995.</p> <p>Chicanos de Brown is founded and is a precursor to the Latin American Students Organization.</p>
1974	The Latin American Students Organization (LASO) is founded.
1975	The Third World Coalition, of the Organization of United African People (OUAP) and the Latin American Students Organization (LASO), leads 56% of the student body to strike after threats by the administration to cut financial aid and student services due to budget cuts. Students occupy University Hall and demand increases to financial aid for students of color as well as demands that the University honor the agreements from the 1968 walkout.
1976	The Third World Center (TWC) opens in the basement of Churchill House.
1982	<p>The Third World Center is robbed and vandalised after a series of anti-Black bottle throwing incidents. The Third World Center and other student organizations respond. Find out more <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Dyslexics at Brown is founded.</p>
1983	<p>Students organized a sit-in to support the TWC.</p> <p>Academic accommodations begin to be offered at Brown.</p>
1984	Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" is recited by the Jabberwocky 13,



	<p>disrupting a lecture by then CIA director Stansfield Turner in addition to student and faculty picketing. The 13 were found guilty of minimal infringements on the rights of others and received no penalty in a hearing before the University Council of Student Affairs.</p>
1985	<p>Approximately 350 Third World students rally to demand that the University resolve issues raised by students of color in previous years. The Third World Coalition occupies the stairs of the John Carter Library to reclaim documents of Brown's slave-holding family. This is the first time that blacks, Asians, and Latinos work together in large numbers. The rally increases Asian matriculation substantially, but several demands from the 1975 protest are still not met, such as increasing the numbers of black students at Brown to their percentage of the U.S. population.</p> <p>Brown Community Outreach (BCO) and Students Against Multiple Sclerosis (SAMS) create the MS Awareness Program.</p>
1986	<p>The Main Green becomes a mock shanty-town by students demonstrating against the Corporations' investments and harmful environmental practices they support. Four students fast in protest and are "disenrolled" by the University for fears of liability.</p>
1987	<p>Students Against Apartheid members who disrupt a Corporation meeting are placed on probation.</p> <p>The TWC is relocated to Partridge Hall, one of the 1985 protest's demands.</p> <p>Center for Study of Race and Ethnicity in America established.</p> <p>Students respond to PJ O'Rourke speech.</p>
1988	<p>Students begin a year-long protest for establishment of an Ethnic Studies department as well as administrative recommitment to the 1968, 1975, and 1985 demands.</p>
1991	<p>The Rape Wall is created by survivors of sexual assault at Brown - victims write the names of their aggressors on the stalls of the Rock and other libraries on campus. Further protest by students and survivors result in policies defining sexual misconduct as a violation of the code of conduct and subject to punishment, counseling services for students, separation measures between the accused and the accuser, the creation of Safewalk, and inclusion of sexual assault education in First Year orientation.</p>

	<p>ABLE (Association for a Better Living Environment) is founded. The group of just four students aimed to identify handicapped freshmen 'needs before their arrival, determine the number of accessible buildings on campus, and increase disability rights awareness.</p> <p>UCS Representative Lee Busabos '92.5 sponsored three referenda to discuss disability issues on campus after multiple letters to the BDH that stated there were not enough disability accommodations on campus. Among 6 questions, 2 addressed the following: Should Brown establish an Office of Disability Issues? Should Brown provide a day-time shuttle with wheelchair-lift for ability-impaired students? The majority of the votes answered 'YES' as the answer to both questions (60.8% for the first and 77.0% for the second).</p>
1993	Over 300 students led by the Students for Admissions and Minority Aid (SAMA) occupy University Hall to demand that the University conduct need-blind admissions policies, increase the financial aid initiatives given to students, and generate more awareness on class diversity. The 253 students who refused to leave the building are arrested - the movement lost momentum as protesters dealt with the consequences of their arrests.
1996	Ethnic Studies becomes a concentration
1998	<p>First official course on disability history is offered at Brown.</p> <p>Project Eye to Eye is founded jointly by a group of Brown students and Fox Point elementary students.</p> <p>Colored Brown, a set of documentaries about Third World activism at Brown, is published by Sophy Pokey Shiahua Wong. <a href="#">The documentary</a> can be found in the library.</p>
1999	A group of MPCs comes together to form a space where concerns of students of color can be addressed. This group evolves into third world ACTION (twA), a multiracial student group dedicated to racial and economic justice, mainly at Brown and in Providence.
2001	<p>Students of color unite to seek apologies from the BDH after Conservative politician David Horowitz pays for an ad in the Herald entitled "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery is a Bad Idea and Racist Too."</p> <p>"The Social Construction Of Mental Illness and its Stigma" is made an</p>

	independent concentration.
2002	Students Against War in Iraq (SAWI) and Not Another Victim Anymore (NAVA) organize protests to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively.
2003	<p>Brown begins its need-blind admission policy for domestic students. Transfer and international students still do not undergo need-blind admissions.</p> <p>Over 1000 Brown and RISD students, faculty, and community members walk out of class and rally in protest over US invasions in the Middle East. After national press attention, teach-ins, rallies, and speakers occur on campus.</p> <p>Brown organizes the Campus Antiwar Network regional conference for students.</p>
2004	A speech by Mort Klein, president of Zionist Organization of America, is protested by students, Providence locals, and a contingent from NYC. Anti-Racist action (ARA) pens <a href="#">a letter to the editor</a> requesting an apology.
2005	<p>Student pressure reverses the University's attempts to cut funding to the American Sign Language Program.</p> <p>Staff and students protest the "temporary worker" status among Dining Services workers which allows the University to underpay and arbitrarily fire workers and limits long-standing employees' rights.</p> <p>An unsuccessful campaign is launched by the Anti-Racist Action to get the Corporation to divest from Israel. Here is <a href="#">a BDH article</a> that covered a protest leading up to the University's decision on divestment. Here are two articles (<a href="#">one</a> and <a href="#">two</a>) that elaborate on an incident where a Zionist spit at some of the protesters during said protest. <a href="#">Another protest</a> was held to follow up the first in April.</p> <p>Anti-Racist Action members pen <a href="#">an article</a> that addresses the rainbow coalition, "a form of white supremacy run by a "progressive" ruling class including people of color," and critiques Ruth Simmons' use of tokenism in order to arm the Brown Department of Public Safety.</p> <p>On November 16th and 17th during a Palestinian Solidarity Week, a student group called Common Ground <a href="#">built a wall on the Main Green</a> to simulate the wall in the West Bank of Palestine.</p>

2006	<p>The administration's attempt to change the grading system to allow for pluses and minuses is rebuffed by students.</p> <p>Energy manager is hired and an advisory committee formed after the Environmental Action Network pressures the University to invest in renewable energy.</p> <p>Students from universities along the East Coast attend the First Regional Northeast Conference hosted by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the first such conference in over 40 years.</p> <p>The Corporation divests from Sudan after the Darfur Action Network protests university investment in 6 Sudanese companies.</p> <p>The University does not outsource the bookstore after persuasion by the Save the Bookstore Coalition.</p> <p>5 students with the national Declaration of Peace campaign are arrested for non-violent civil disobedience at the RI Senator's office.</p> <p>Radical University Queers United and Strong (RUQUS) demonstrates to raise awareness about and encourage implementation of gender-neutral bathrooms.</p> <p>Students give speeches and disperse fliers from a balcony in Alumnae Hall on to Corporation members below in an attempt to inform them about needed compensation improvements and benefits for Dining Services Workers.</p> <p>Rallies, marches, Speak Out sessions, and generation of Coalition for Police Accountability and Institutional Transparency (CoPAIT) result in response to incidents of police brutality against students of color.</p>
2007	<p>In January, SDS launches Brown's first disorientation guide. BDH article <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Students critique the BDH for ignoring Anti-War events on campus. Op-ed <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
2008	<p>Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) protest CIA and Raytheon (defense contractor) recruiter presence on campus by simulating dead bodies on the main green.</p> <p>In April, students pied Thomas Friedman in the face before he gave a talk about corporate environmentalism. Video footage <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

	<p>On September 12th, SDS <a href="#">leads a march</a> for Corporation transparency, a tuition freeze, and better compensation for student workers.</p> <p>In October, 7 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) members attempt to disrupt an October Corporation meeting because of its undemocratic decision-making processes and lack of transparency. In the following year, they are sentenced in a disciplinary hearing to <a href="#">probation for their protest</a>. Here is <a href="#">A BDH letter</a> to the editor that argues for the students' vindication.</p>
2009	<p>Third World Action becomes the Brown Immigrant Rights Coalition (BIRC).</p> <p>Brown Students for Justice in Palestine is born.</p> <p>Students' transparency advocacy ultimately results in a New Alumni Trustee position with limited power and whose selection process is akin to an appointment. BDH article <a href="#">one</a> and <a href="#">two</a> and <a href="#">three</a>.</p> <p>The Open the Books Coalition (SDS, SLA, and SJP) is formed after the May Corporation meeting. The object of the coalition is to achieve transparency related to the universities investment portfolio. BDH article <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
2011	<p>Students strike to support the Occupy movement (Occupy College Hill) and to protest police brutality at UC Davis (sparked by the pepper spray incident).</p>
2012	<p>Student Labor Alliance protests the University contract with Adidas for its sweatshop practices.</p> <p>First GISP on disability offered. See the proposal <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Student protests request that the Corporation increase contributions to the City of Providence. Providence locals protest Brown's tax exemptions - Brown holds a large percentage of land in Providence but as a non-profit, it pays limited taxes. Universities like Brown, RISD, Johnson &amp; Wales, hold high-value property but pay very little in taxes.</p> <p>In October, <a href="#">a wall is erected on the Main Green</a> by BSJP and BIRC to protest Zionism and Xenophobia and to highlight the connection between the United States-Mexico border and the West Bank</p>

	separation barrier. BSJP and BIRC respond to criticism <a href="#">here</a> .
2013	<p>Student Labor Alliance supports hotel workers demanding better treatment; conversations end in worker unionization and tax breaks for the Renaissance Hotel.</p> <p>Students protest the Keystone XL pipeline construction in Boston (1 student arrested) and Washington DC.</p> <p>Students and community members protest a speech given by Raymond Kelly, then-NYPD commissioner, who implemented the Stop and Frisk policy. The lecture was cancelled following the protest sparking wide media coverage. A short-lived student union emerged in the nights after the protest.</p>
2014	<p>Lecture at Hillel by an Israeli Defense Forces sergeant sparks protest for his opposition to a two-state solution to Israeli-Palestinian conflict.</p> <p>Students and staff gather over the summer to protest the outsourcing of Mail Services.</p> <p>Brown and RISD students and black student groups organize teach-ins and die-in protests in response to the Ferguson grand jury's decision not to indict PO Darren Wilson for the murder of Michael Brown.</p> <p>The 1vyG conference for First-Generation Ivy League students is borne out of a GISP by First-Generation Students in the Ivy League.</p> <p>The Task Force on Sexual Assault is formed, with members from the administration, faculty, undergraduate class, and graduate class, in response to student and faculty calls for sexual assault reform on campus. Their task is to generate recommendations to the university on policies to address and confront the sexual and gender-based violence and harassment on campus.</p> <p>In December, Students Against the Prison Industrial Complex (SAPIC) submitted a proposal to the Dean of the College to make <i>The New Jim Crow</i> the official First Readings of the Class of 2019. <a href="#">Here</a> is a Bluestockings article. After continued advocacy in the following year, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> was selected for the First Readings of the Class of 2019.</p>
2015	Students carry mattresses on campus and rally together in support of Columbia University's Emma Sulkowicz and her movement Carry

	<p>That Weight in response to university mishandling of her sexual assault case.</p> <p>Students4RJ forms and holds a silent protest and march through campus and University Hall to protest Brown's mishandling of two students' sexual assault cases that year.</p> <p>Project Heal's Brown chapter established.</p> <p>The Task Force on Sexual Assault delivers its final report to the community and Corporation; it includes recommendations on the establishment of a Title IX Office with a dedicated lead Officer to investigate any reported sexual assaults. They also recommend the clarification and transparency of the 'Process' with standardized protocols for investigation, examination, and testing of all relevant materials as well as mandatory annual education programs for students, staff, and faculty.</p> <p>Following two racist articles in BDH (<a href="#">Columbian Exchange Day</a> and <a href="#">The White Privilege of Cows</a>), student groups of color quickly condemned the articles in a <a href="#">joint statement to the BDH</a> and then encouraged folks to attend a die-in and protest (on October 9th and 12th respectively) related to Indigenous Peoples' Day being organized by Natives @ Brown (N@B). Later that month N@B presented at the Brown University Community Council (BUCC), which forwarded a proposal to the faculty where it stalled for about a year.</p> <p>On November 12th, Students staged a Blackout in solidarity with students at the University of Missouri. Flickr photos <a href="#">here</a>. Video footage <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>. Bluestockings article <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>On November 14th, a student from Dartmouth attending the Latinx Ivy League Conference was assaulted by DPS. <a href="#">Here's</a> a statement released by a collective of delegates at the conference.</p> <p>On December 3rd, students organized a Day of Reclamation for the collective creation of demands in response to the diversity and inclusion action plan released on November 19th. The action ended in the storming of president Paxson's Office in University Hall. Footage of the office takeover <a href="#">here</a>. BDH coverage <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
2016	<p>Indigenous Peoples Day gets approved in February 2016.</p> <p>Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) boycotted a pro-Zionist lecture</p>

	<p>by Michael Douglas and Natan Sharnasky in January. <a href="#">Here</a> is a statement from SJP. Later that semester, students petitioned Janet Mock to disaffiliate an upcoming talk from Zionist sponsors Moral Voices and Brown/RISD Hillel, which ultimately resulted in her cancelling the engagement.</p> <p>First-Generation student center opens in the summer of 2016. This would eventually become the Undocumented, First-Generation, Low-Income (U-FLi) Center.</p> <p>In response to the election of Donald Trump, on November 16th, students organized the #OurCampus walkout in solidarity with #NoDAPL, Movimiento Cosecha, and the Sanctuary Campus movements. <a href="#">Here</a> are the #OurCampus demands. Bluestockings articles <a href="#">one</a>, <a href="#">two</a>, and <a href="#">three</a>. YouTube videos <a href="#">one</a> and <a href="#">two</a>.</p> <p>Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) students rally the BCSC for greater representation and resources, as well as recognition that SWANA are People of Color. In a show of solidarity, existing BCSC Heritage Series (Black, Latinx, Native American, Asian/Asian American, and Multiracial) agree to take pay cuts and redistribute funding for the creation of a SWANA Heritage Series in Fall 2016.</p>
2017	<p>In April, students protest the University's investments in Citizens Bank, which helps fund the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). BDH article <a href="#">here</a>. An open letter to Christina Paxson <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Summer RAs protested in response to an incidence of racial bias against a coworker that ultimately resulted in their termination. A platform of demands including the RAs reinstatement, amnesty for all taking part in protests, an apology from the university, and higher pay for summer RAs was put forward. The RAs successfully acquired a pay increase. <a href="#">Here</a> is a BDH article. RPLs received a pay increase the upcoming semester. <a href="#">Here</a> is a BDH article.</p> <p>Summer RAs also began the Ratty AC campaign after communications with workers who were struggling in the heat. SLA continued this work in the months that followed, and circulated <a href="#">a petition</a> calling for safe working conditions at the Ratty. After many months of pressure and interim solutions, <a href="#">the university announced</a> a \$3 million investment in air conditioning units for the Ratty.</p> <p>On August 20th, 2017, the Pokanoket Nation began an <a href="#">encampment at Potumtuk</a> in Bristol, Rhode Island to reclaim their sacred land from</p>



	<p>Brown. On September 5th, they planned the event “Pokanoket Convocation: A March for the Land” during the matriculation ceremony for the Class of 2021 and staged a march and protest during convocation. Students and Alumni for Po Metacom Camp (SAMPC) wrote a <a href="#">statement</a> in support of the encampment. Institutional actors critiqued the encampment including <a href="#">Dr. Adrienne Keene</a> and <a href="#">the Steering Committee of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative</a>. <a href="#">Here</a> is an email from an anonymous faculty member critiquing Dr. Keene’s response. An agreement was signed on September 21st, which can be found <a href="#">here</a>. SAPMC wrote a <a href="#">response</a> to the agreement, stating “The Fight is Not Over.”</p> <p>In October, Brown Immigrant Rights Coalition held a rally on the Main Green to advocate for a “clean” DREAM Act. BDH article <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>In November, students protest against the GOP Tax Bill, which would increase income tax on graduate student stipends and tuition waivers, effectively cutting their incomes in half. BDH article <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
2018	<p>In April, Brown Immigrant Rights Coalition pens <a href="#">a BDH article</a> calling out Steven Kinzer for a syllabus that required students to profile someone who qualifies as a “Dreamer.”</p> <p>Disability Justice at Brown is born.</p> <p>In May, an institutional knowledge sharing workshop was hosted by a number of upperclassmen that brought together students and alumni engaged in a variety of different struggles for social and economic justice.</p> <p>During the summer, the Director of Residential Education and 4 of the Community Directors (CDs) resigned. The two remaining CDs and Residential Peer Leaders were consequently, undertrained, undersupported, and overworked. Students demanded additional compensation, but were denied said compensation. Students also demanded the formation of new positions/job descriptions that would encapsulate additional labor that they had been taken on in order for them to receive back pay, but they were denied. Residential Life has continued to experience high turnover and remains understaffed.</p> <p>SUGSE organizes a movement to unionize grad students, and in November of 2019 they <a href="#">successfully achieve unionization</a>. <a href="#">Here</a> is a cluster of their materials or you can check out their website.</p>

	<p>SJP's anti-Brown Israel Fund campaign receives support from 50+ student organizations on campus and sets the ground for the Brown Divest campaign.</p> <p>On December 5th, on the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Black student walkout, #BLACKWALK50 is staged in an effort to revitalize the demands that had been made by Black students from 1968 and on. Here is a link to the <a href="#">video announcing the action</a> and a <a href="#">podcast made in post</a>.</p> <p>Students from <a href="#">EJ@Brown</a> and other student organizations begin to critique Warren Kanders relationship to the university (serving on the IBES Advisory Council and funding a lecture series with the Brown Arts Initiative).</p>
2019	<p>The Brown Divest campaign is launched at the beginning of the Spring Semester and takes aim at companies that facilitated human rights abuses in Palestine. Here is a <a href="#">video</a> released with their launch (easter egg at 2:01). The campaign included a number of teach-ins, demonstrations, etc. At the end of the semester the student referendum on divestment passed with 69% of voting students supporting divestment. The target of the campaign then became acquiring a recommendation from ACCRIP, which was successfully achieved on December 2nd of 2019.</p> <p>In the summer of 2019, the director of the BCSC, Joshua Sehui, was unjustifiably fired. Students protested his firing over the course of the summer and fall semester. <a href="#">Here</a> is a timeline of events. The fall semester culminated with separate articles being released by <a href="#">alumni</a> and <a href="#">staff</a> about their support of organizing related to Joshua's firing. Over winter break, the supervisor responsible for his firing, Dr. Nicole Truesdell, was moved from Campus Life to the university's faculty. The search for a new director continues, and many would like to see Joshua reinstated.</p> <p><a href="#">Warren Kanders Must Go</a> organizers disrupt Family Weekend. BDH article <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

## **“We were absolutely unified”: Remembering Third World History at Brown University<sup>6</sup>**

*Solidarity did not mean subsuming your struggles to help someone else; it was intended to strengthen the political commitments from other groups by getting them to recognize how the different struggles were related to each other and connected under capitalism. It called for greater awareness and understanding, not less. – Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor*

7

Welcome to the Third World Transition Program (TWTP)! By attending this program, you will benefit from decades of student activism. In fact, we can trace TWTP's origins 50 years to the 1968 Walkout. In May 1968, students from the Afro-American Society presented a list of demands to the University. It was thirteen years after *Brown v the Board of Education* and four years after Freedom Summer, and the University in 1968 seemed to be moving at a glacial pace towards fulfilling the goals of the Civil Rights Movement. In the 200 years since the University's founding, a total of only 153 Black students had been enrolled.<sup>8</sup> Frustrated and mourning the recent assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, the students' demands included: improved financial support for Black students; increased university focus on Black admissions; the hiring of Black staff, counselors, and admissions officers; and a building dedicated to Black students as a social and political space. "Dig it!" they bluntly said in their statement. The University had better get it. No more vague promises of realizing the dream of racial equality. Real action was long overdue.

The University acceded to their demands, but were slow to implement the plan—so much so that in 1975, students rose up again in non-violent protest. This time, other students of color joined Black students, and it was this second action that immediately led to the establishment of the Third World Transition Program and the founding of the Third World Center (TWC) in the basement of Churchill House.<sup>9</sup> A decade later, in 1985, activist students felt that Brown's record of admitting and hiring PoC (people of color) still urgently needed improving that they occupied the John Carter

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<sup>6</sup> Emmitt Carlton, interview by Angelica Cotto, July 18, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, ed. *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. (Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2017), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua Gray, "Protest at Brown, 1968-1982," n.d., 4. Brown Center for Students of Color Digital Archives. This total can be further broken down into 110 Black men and 43 Black women, as the first co-ed class at Brown graduated in 1975.

<sup>9</sup> Churchill House on Angell Street is now the departmental home of Africana Studies.

Brown Library.<sup>10</sup> In the agreement following this 1985 protest, the Third World Center moved to Patridge Hall, where it stands today. The Center's move from the basement of Churchill House to an entire building just steps from the Main Green reflects how students fought and succeed in bringing issues affecting students of color to the literal center of campus.

In 2014, the TWC was renamed the Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC). This change was not a result of an upsurge of student demands, although many students supported the change.<sup>11</sup> By then, the reason why the Center was called "Third World" was lost to many students, administrators, and faculty. This amnesia is unfortunate because in recent years, the activist environment at Brown has been fraught with conflict, and the founding spirit of multiracial coalition of the TWC has been replaced by a tendency towards division along the lines of race/ethnicity. Remembering Third World history at Brown is critical to successful activism. Without this history, we run the risk of falling into the traps of unproductive divisiveness, rather than focusing our energies on the resolution of important issues. We offer below a brief history of the TWC, delving a bit deeper into its founding, in order to demonstrate how student activism has mattered at Brown and why multiracial coalition was and is still essential to achieving student activist goals.

First, we need to sketch a picture of how Brown looked to PoC students during the late 1960s and 1970s. Although Brown now touts the number of PoC admitted each year, the number of PoC at Brown was low enough even during the late 1970s that PoCs could identify just about every other PoC on campus.<sup>12</sup> Black students founded the Afro-American Society in 1967; Asian American students formed the Asian American Students' Association (AASA) in 1970; and Latinx students formed the Latin American Students' Organization (LASO) in 1974-75.<sup>13</sup> During this period, in 1972, the

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<sup>10</sup> The terms "student of color" or "people of color" (PoC) were not widely used during the 20th century, but we use these current terms to avoid descriptors like "minority" in this paper. We will also be using the term "Latinx" in order to refer to students of Latin American descent in a gender-neutral and gender-inclusive fashion.

<sup>11</sup> Many other students, however, did not support the change. A number of faculty in Africana, American Studies/Ethnic Studies, and History strongly advised against the name change. The faculty criticized the proposed name change as erasure of history and of the aspirational activist impulse embedded in the name "Third World Center."

<sup>12</sup> Robert G. Lee, interview by Angelica Cotto, Nicaurys Rodriguez, and Naoko Shibusawa, June 26, 2018. Note: the number of PoC admitted to Brown is still low. In fall 2017, Brown University's undergraduate class of nearly 7,000 included fewer than 200 Black men and 270 Black women. For stats on other groups see: Factbook, Office of Institutional Research, Brown University <<https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutionalresearch/factbook/enrollment>>. [accessed 25 July 2018].

<sup>13</sup> As the number of Third World students increased, new organizations and programming were developed. The Minority Peer Counseling program was originally created to service the needs of Black students, but by the 1980s Latinx, Asian, Native American, and multiracial students were also included. Arab American students were added to this constituent list in 1995. In 1989, The Native American

Afro-American Society changed its name to the Organization of United African Peoples (OUAP) to reflect the principles of Black Liberation and Pan- Africanism. They believed it was important to ground the organization's principles in an internationalist perspective. Although students created separate groups to serve the social and political needs of their respective constituencies, alumni from this period say that a natural camaraderie developed among students of color. Due to their similar concerns and lack of resources on campus, Black alumni Robert Boyd '78 recalled, "It was natural for us to embrace."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Robert Eng '77 confirmed that these groups were in communication with each other before the formation of the Third World Coalition, but it was not until the collapse of another student coalition in 1975 that students of color felt the need to formally stand together and pressure the University to honor its commitments to diversity and inclusion.

By 1975, the University's expansion resulted in financial strains and budgetary cuts, forcing students of color to fight harder to become a priority. In February of that year, President Donald F. Hornig released a statement outlining how student support services and financial aid were the areas slotted for cuts.<sup>16</sup> A wave of Brown's student body surged in opposition to cuts that would disproportionately impact services for poor students and students of color. A multiracial group of students formed "The Coalition" with the express purpose of advocating for an alternative budget plan more favorable to student interests. They agreed to add the OUAP demands that the University honor the 1968 agreement, which still remained largely unfulfilled. The Coalition eventually came to encompass some 3,000 students, who voted to cease all normal activities from April 15-18, 1975. The Coalition dissolved on April 21-22, after declaring victory following the administration's agreement to include students in budgetary decisions in the future. The University addressed the OUAP demands concerning the 1968 agreement by announcing the establishment of a Committee for Minority Affairs.<sup>17</sup> Most white students felt satisfied, but two concessions allowed the University to kick resolutions of both issues—student funding and diversity—further into the future.

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Advocacy Group (NAAG) was established as Native Americans at Brown (NAB). Recently, in 2016, the Southwest Asian North African (SWANA) Heritage Series began in acknowledgment of the previous lack of recognition for this particular racialized experience.

<sup>14</sup> Robert, Boyd, interview by Angelica Cotto, August 17, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> The admissions tables provided in Shu-Ling Chen's dissertation make no note of non-Black PoC admissions before the Class of '79. This is incorrect because interviews with several alums from the '70s who graduated prior to '79 and report that there were "literally a handful of Asian and Latin American students," or otherwise confirmed that there were very few non-Black PoC. Attempts to access older admissions demographics information from Brown's website were unsuccessful.

<sup>16</sup> Shu-Ling Chen, "Debates over Third World Centers at Princeton, Brown and Harvard: Minority Student Activism and Institutional Responses in the 1960s and 1970s" (Ed.D., Harvard University, 2000), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304610518/abstract/ACF44EE719514F2FPQ/1>.

<sup>17</sup> Chen, "Debates over Third World Centers at Princeton, Brown and Harvard," 116.

OUAP leaders, however, were upset. After seven years of waiting, they were told to wait again. Former OUAP board member Robert Boyd '78 recalls his experience following the announcement:

. . . there was a guy, Chris - I forget his last name, but we used to call him Bullet, and he was crying, and saying, 'That's not right. They didn't take care of the things we were fighting for,' and that's when we went and found Vince and JJ [fellow OUAP members] and started talking about the takeover.<sup>18</sup>

They decided to occupy University Hall. They couldn't be ignored by Brown's upper administration if they sat right in front of the President's and Provost's offices. They knew that this bold move would be risky so they planned carefully. They wanted their action to triumph, and they wanted to avoid violence. The antiwar protests at Kent State just five years earlier had resulted in the shooting deaths of four unarmed college protesters.<sup>19</sup> The OUAP therefore made two strategic moves for safety and success: they acquired a lawyer and reached out to the Latinx and Asian activists in order to have greater numbers participate in the takeover. By hanging out with Latinx and Asian activists, the OUAP knew that their fellow PoC activists were also quite invested in making University become a more welcoming space for students of color. The Latinx and Asian activists readily accepted the call— after all, they already knew and trusted each other— and all together, they formed the Third World Coalition.<sup>20</sup> Former OUAP member and Third World Coalition member Robert Boyd '78 explained that it was natural to settle on the name Third World Coalition, because central to Third Worldism is “an acknowledgment of the commonality of our goals and of our positions, and of a desire to aid and support each other.”<sup>21</sup> OUAP's name change from Afro-American Society already signaled that they were primed to think more broadly about solidarity. Third World solidarity among peoples of color was inspired by their related, yet unique, experiences of oppression from centuries of racism and imperialism across the globe and within the United States.

The concept of the Third World comes from the Cold War. Today, the term is used as a synonym for poor nations. But as historian Vijay Prashad has pointed out, the Third World was not a place; it was an ideal, a project.<sup>22</sup> When the term was coined, it represented hope for the newly decolonized nations that they would not beholden to the agendas of either the First World (the United States and its allies) or the Second World

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Robert Boyd.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Robert Boyd.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Eng, interview by Angelica Cotto, August 16, 2018

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Robert Boyd.

<sup>22</sup> Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New Press, 2007), xv.

(the Soviet Union and its allies). An early expression of decolonized nations to strike their own path came at the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia. Representatives of the 29 African and Asian nations in attendance envisioned a Third Way, which was anti-imperialist and aligned with neither superpower. Indonesian President Ahmed Sukarno declared that this Third Way, and the Third World they hoped to create, would achieve “the liberation of man from his bonds of fear, his bonds of poverty, the liberation of man from the physical, spiritual and intellectual bonds which have for long stunted the development of humanity’s majority.”<sup>23</sup> The 1966 Tricontinental Meeting in Havana included Latin America and reaffirmed the principles of Third Worldism. Most Latin American countries won independence from Spain and Portugal in the early 19th century, but remained oppressed by neocolonialism—that is, while they ostensibly had their political independence, their economies remained shackled to the interests of the richer nations of the Global North. So in 1966, representatives from 82 nations at the Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America committed to end imperialist oppression and racism.

College students of color throughout the US identified with Third Worldism because it is internationalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-racist. In a 1968 interview, a Latinx member of the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State emphasized that Third Worldism was important because as people of color, they were “all oppressed systematically as individuals and as a people by society.”<sup>24</sup> Many Brown students were attuned to, and sometimes involved in, student protests at other colleges. Robert Boyd ‘78 said that he and other activist students attended many protests at schools along the East Coast. He attested to the solidarity Brown’s students of color felt with other student protests in the United States.<sup>25</sup> Although alumni found it difficult to remember the specifics of where they first heard about Third Worldism, protests in the late 1960s at schools like San Francisco State and University of California at Berkeley might have been the inspiration for Brown students to begin identifying with Third Worldism.

The new Third World Coalition of Black, Latinx, and Asian students occupied University Hall on April 24, 1975. By the time they exited the building the next day, Brown had agreed to almost all of their demands, which expanded upon the OUAP’s initial demands to include all people of color.<sup>26</sup> In accordance with the Third World Coalition’s wish, Brown University agreed to treat all students of color equally and promised to increase admissions by 25% in each underrepresented student group

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<sup>23</sup> Gary Y. Okihiro, *Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation* (North Carolina, United States: Duke University Press, 2016), 16-17. 19 Okihiro, *Third World Studies*, 18-26.

<sup>24</sup> Okihiro, *Third World Studies*, 18-26.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Robert Boyd.

<sup>26</sup> Brown University Documents Relating to Minority Affairs [4-25],” 25 April, 1975, Index B: 1975, Third World Student Activism and Protest at Brown: Historical Documents from 1967 to 1991, Brown University Archives.

within the next three years.<sup>27</sup> The takeover also resulted in the hiring of a part time minority admissions officer, additional recruitment efforts among underrepresented communities, and plans to convert Afro House into the Third World Center.<sup>28</sup>

Black students in the OUAP fully supported the conversion of the Afro House into the Third World Center because they understood that their victory rested on their solidarity with other PoC activists. All felt they would be stronger together. PoC students shared a connection because of their experience of “feeling the effects of being put-down based on how you look as opposed to what you say, or how you think.”<sup>29</sup> Realizing the power of what their solidarity could achieve, PoC students wanted the Third World Center to serve as a space where they could organize, hang out, and be themselves without feeling judged or otherwise pressured to conform. Emmitt Carlton ‘83, former OUAP representative and member of the Third World Coalition, stressed the importance of the Third World Center as a symbol of togetherness and a place where students of color felt safe.<sup>30</sup>

Yet the Third World Coalition was not simply interested in creating what we today would call a “safe space.” They wanted to make it a source for academic support and activism—that is, a place to think about how they could impact the production of knowledge at Brown. An undated position paper likely written around 1976 asks that the center focus on “the intellect of the Third World creations on issues other than protest.”<sup>31</sup> This hints at the larger issue: Eurocentric curricula spread an incomplete depiction of history by marginalizing the histories of people of color. Third World students desired all Brown students receive a more nuanced, comprehensive education that would enable the pursuit of social justice and historical honesty. Furthermore, the position paper’s author highlights the need for the space to host intellectual and social events is highlighted when they stress the need for “a large space for exhibits, shows and gatherings.” Beyond that, the position paper suggests that the Third World Center could serve to support PoC academically with study areas complete with reference and computer resources. Since computers were not as easily accessible in the 1970s before the age of the personal computers, the position paper was proposing that the TWC be a place where students could gain access to unparalleled tools for academic success.

Today, the Brown Center for Students of Color continues to function as a resource for students of color. Although the name has changed, the Center’s aims now are true to the original intentions of the Third World Center: the BCSC’s programming intends to empower PoC, to encourage cross-cultural understanding and reflection, and

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<sup>27</sup> Chen, “Debates over Third World Centers at Princeton, Brown and Harvard,” 118.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Robert Eng.

<sup>29</sup> Judith Burrell, interview by Angelica Cotto, August 15, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Emmitt Carlton, interview by Angelica Cotto. July 18, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Chen, “Debates over Third World Centers at Princeton, Brown and Harvard,” 36.



to pursue policies of social justice. That said, many Brown activists in recent years appear to be unaware of the historical context which led to the Center's founding. Rather than building each other up and working toward common causes, many students have fixated on disagreements and activism that seems more performative than substantive. Harmful politics abound in the form of unnecessary call-out culture, failures in communication, and distrust among various student constituencies. In acknowledging these recent trends in activism, we would like to stress that students are not simply acting poorly. Students of color organize around issues which are incredibly important to them because they are fighting for their safety, and the emotional toll of this struggle should not be understated. While students in decades past organized around issues such as racial diversity/inclusion, divestment from South Africa, and US imperialism, PoC today live in a world in which global income inequality has skyrocketed since the 1970s as a result of neoliberalism. And although we now see more PoCs in positions of power, the Black Lives Matter movement, the separation of immigrant families, and the continuing violence toward indigenous communities remind us that we continue to live in a racist society.

One prominent example of when student activism has gone awry was during the 2013 protests against a paid lecture delivered by police chief Ray Kelly, which had ripple effects throughout the Brown community. We discuss this incident in more depth in our podcast, but want to touch on it here to point out the need to remember the concept of Third Worldism. Sarah Day Dayon, a 2015 alum involved in the protest, remembered the aftermath as "toxic." Reflecting back on the events, she points to the trouble caused by the lack of communication between students of different backgrounds before, during, and after the protest: "I think a lot of it was just talking in circles. And people not trusting each other. . . . It was really hard in those moments of tension to come together as a community because everyone was so angry and upset."<sup>32</sup> Although many of the activists and other students involved in this incident opposed Kelly's racist stop-and-frisk policies, the lack of dialogue between various groups produced misunderstandings, and the emotional toll of these events resulted in bitterness and hurt feelings. Although the Ray Kelly incident happened five years ago, divisions and misunderstandings remain among many Brown activists today. Keeping this present context in mind, we asked former Third World Coalition member Emmitt Carlton '83 how the Third World Coalition managed to stand together. He credited the efficiency of the Coalition to students' emphasis on communication within and between PoC groups before they chose to act on issues; it was absolutely critical that they "figure out stuff amongst ourselves so we wouldn't fight about stuff in public." Even within and between activist constituencies, conflict will arise based on ideologies, methods, or identity

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<sup>32</sup> Sarah Day Dayon, interview by May Niiya and Nicaurys Rodríguez, July 23, 2018.

politics. But we cannot forget that we all are working toward the same goal of universal liberation.

At the end of every interview, we asked alumni what advice they would give to incoming Freshmen. After a pause, former OUAP member Laura Hankins '87 said:

Being confident in your own identity and reaching out and hearing others' experiences isn't taking away or diminishing your own. Brown is its own journey, the start of a life journey, so you don't have to have arrived knowing everything, and in fact it's really ok to realize how much you don't know - not in some book sense, and not like, 'oh, you're all kids,' but realizing people have so many growing up experiences, and what you can learn from them . . . I feel like that's a step to not having this idea of 'sign onto my cause, because I'm the most oppressed,' because we're not getting anywhere with that.<sup>33</sup>

We encourage you to continue to dig through the TWC/BCSC's history so that institutional memory may be preserved. This is not to say that previous activists and movements on campus were perfect. Although we are consciously trying not to romanticize history, looking through the archives at the manifestos and actions of students of color at this university is inspiring, and there is much to learn from this history.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank former Dean of the College Maud Mandel, the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, and the Office of Campus Life for funding this project. We dedicate special thanks to our advisor, Professor Naoko Shibusawa, for her guidance and tutelage throughout this process. We would also like to thank the alumni and faculty who agreed to be interviewed for this project. Although we interviewed more people than were included in this paper, everyone we interviewed contributed something to our understanding of this history, and we hope to put their stories to educational use in the future.

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<sup>33</sup> Laura Hankins, interview by Angelica Cotto, August 7, 2018.

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\*All interviews conducted by Angelica Cotto unless otherwise noted.

“No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free.”

– Assata Shakur

## A Timeline of Student Environmental Activism

*Note From the **OG Compilers**:* By talking about the history of emPOWER (the umbrella organization for student environmental groups on campus), we wanted to promote conversation about different organizing principles and the dynamics between institutional initiatives and student activism. There are currently eleven emPOWER groups, but we are focusing mainly on the groups that are involved in EJ (environmental justice).

Feel free to make comments, suggestions, and edits [here](#)!

**Additions and edits by Nina Wolff Landau, Mayo Saji, and others!!!**

Date	Milestone
1970	Inaugural Earth Day worldwide
1978	The Center for Environmental Studies (now Institute at Brown for Environment and Society) is formed
1996	<p>The Jemez Principles for democratic organizing are written and adopted at a globalization meeting hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of arriving at common understandings between participants from different, politics, and organizations.</p> <p>The principles include inclusiveness, bottom-up organizing, letting people speak for themselves, working in solidarity and mutuality, building just relationships, and commitment to self-transformation. The full list can be seen <a href="http://ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf">ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf</a></p>
2005	The Sustainable Food Initiative (SuFI) is founded by a group of students who wanted to see more sustainable food on

	campus.
2006	<p>Brown Environmental Action Network (BEAN) kicks off emPOWER, a campaign calling on Brown to become climate neutral by reducing or offsetting all of its carbon emissions.</p> <p>BEAN is a non-hierarchical, consensus-oriented organization working passionately to reduce Brown's environmental impact. With an ideological commitment to environmental justice, BEAN coordinated environmental campaigns and projects on campus.</p> <p>BEAN pressures the university to invest in renewable energy. An energy manager is hired and an advisory committee formed.</p> <p>SuFI establishes an organic garden on Hope and Charlesfield Street. (This is the garden outside of the Young Orchard dorms.)</p>
2007	<p>In the spring of 2007, BEAN's campaign achieves its goal of having the university reach carbon neutrality through reductions, renewables, and offsets by 2008, as well as reduce emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.</p> <p>Following the victory, BEAN continues to exist for about a year while emPOWER efforts transition toward the implementation of policy. Student action is somewhat split between "lifestyle environmentalism" and policy changes, with policy being the main initial focus of emPOWER.</p> <p>Details on progress made on these goals are not easily accessible, but summary statistics show that university is on track to reduce its emissions 42% by 2020 (an</p>

	<p>immediate goal), mainly through retrofits and efficiency measures.</p>
2008	<p>The Rhode Island Student Climate Coalition (RISCC) is founded at the biannual PowerShift conference after students from Brown University and the University of Rhode Island decided to collaborate to pursue a clean energy future.</p> <p>Mission statement: RISCC is a statewide alliance of students and youth working for a clean, safe, and just future for all. We work both on our campuses and within the community in Rhode Island, by building relationships between organizations and policymakers that are focused on building a sustainable and just economy with green jobs, clean air, land, and water, that transition our society away from dirty energy as well as social and environmental injustice. We empower each other so that we have a stake in our environmental future and are given a seat at the table.</p>
2009	<p>Bikes@Brown branches off from Brown Outing Club to offer free bike rental and repairs on campus.</p> <p>Beyond the Bottle forms within emPOWER in February.</p> <p>The group was partially inspired by the bottled water ban at Washington University in St. Louis.</p> <p>SuFI and other groups launch the Real Food Initiative at Brown.</p> <p>The Real Food Initiative was an iteration of a nation wide organization devoted to promoting sustainable food. It became a part of Brown Dining Services'</p>



	<p>Sustainability Program as part of a collaboration between SuFI, the Student Labor Alliance, and Students for a Democratic Society.</p>
2010	<p>SCRAP is founded with a goal of implementing composting on the institutional level.</p> <p>SCRAP later shifted its focus to include supplying a means of composting for students living both on and off campus. In March 2015, it helped in the implementation of a composting pilot in Andrew Dining Hall, with hopes of further expansion</p>
2011	<p>Bikes@Brown joins emPOWER and opens a repair shop in the hallway near the Kasper Multipurpose Room in Faunce.</p>
2012	<p>The Brown Divest Coal Campaign is founded in September, when a group of students meet in a classroom to discuss the idea of making Brown a leader in fossil fuel divestment.</p> <p>The campaign decided to focus on the 15 dirtiest coal companies with a long-term goal of divestment from all fossil fuels.</p> <p>Bill McKibben of 350.org joined Divest Coal for a special stop on his Do the Math tour in November</p> <p>600 people come out to hear McKibben speak about the urgency of the climate crisis and the role of universities in solving it.</p> <p>Brown Climate Action Fund (renamed Brown University Climate Action League) is founded. Their pilot project was EcoFlow, a campaign to reduce water</p>

	usage by replacing inefficient showerheads.
2013	<p>In April, Brown's Advisory Committee on Corporate Responsibility in Investment Policies (ACCRIP) issues a recommendation that the university divest from coal. In May, Brown Divest Coal is the first student group in memory to present at a Corporation meeting.</p> <p>The committee considers issues of ethical and moral responsibility in the investment policies of Brown University. Their evaluation criteria includes the potential for "positive impact toward correcting the specified social harm, or when the company in question contributes to social harm so grave that it would be inconsistent with the goals and principles of the University to accept funds from that source."</p> <p>October 27th, President Paxson announces that Brown University has decided not to divest from the 15 largest coal companies in the US.</p> <p>In response, Brown students deliver a letter to President Paxson demanding more transparency, accountability, and responsiveness from the administration. 15 students and frontline community members sit in University Hall insisting the University become more representative of the voices of Brown's community, and divest from the coal industry. Student activists come together for a short-lived student union focused on holding the university accountable.</p> <p>Students run an unsuccessful campaign for an environmental justice track within the Environmental Studies curriculum</p>

	<p>during the development of the new ES curriculum.</p> <p>Students begin to work with the Green &amp; Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI). This leads to the formation of the Healthy Housing Hub group on campus.</p>
2014	<p>RISCC participates in the initial stages of the Resilient RI Act, working with community groups, and policymakers. The bill provides a framework for the RI government to plan for and manage climate change impacts, with the ultimate target of an 80% reduction from 1990 emission levels by 2050.</p> <p>After the push for fossil fuel divestment in 2012 and 2013 was rejected by the administration, university president Christina Paxson turned to Resilient RI to find other ways to address climate change. Brown paid several students to assist with the bill before and during the legislative session. The long-term impact of this legislation still remains to be seen.</p> <p>September 21st: The People's Climate March in NYC draws 400,000 protesters, including 400+ from Brown and the greater Providence community.</p> <p>November 8th: The first RI Youth Summit on the Environment (RYSE conference) brings together students from various groups and movements.</p> <p>The conference was planned with the aim of bringing activist voices together and questioning the role of environmentalism in society, as well as exploring intersections between different movements and perspectives.</p>
2015	RISCC joins Burrillville Against Spectra

	<p>Expansion and the FANG Collective in an ongoing campaign against natural gas expansion in Rhode Island.</p> <p>The campaign began after the expansion of Spectra Energy's Burrillville compressor station was announced. The proposed expansion would double the capacity of the compressor station and further entrench natural gas into the state's energy mix.</p> <p>Camila Bustos and Michael Murphy write an <a href="#">op-ed for The Brown Daily Herald</a>, describing their experiences with racism and a lack of diversity and inclusion within the <a href="#">Institute at Brown for Environment and Society (IBES)</a>.</p>
2016	<p>In June, the FANG Collective and Environmental Justice League of RI join efforts in the #NoLNGinPVD campaign that is led by Monica Huertas against National Grid's proposed liquefied natural gas facility in South Providence. Brown students attend, and have continued to attend protests and rallies.</p> <p>Building on many years of student activism within IBES, advocating for environmental justice curriculum and more diverse faculty, students continue to pressure IBES leadership. The draft Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan does not address issues on lack of representation of students or faculty of color nor of inclusive environmental justice curriculum. In response, students pressure IBES publicly by <a href="#">writing their own DIAP</a> that calls for a required class on environmental justice, the beginning of an Environmental Justice track, the hiring of more professors of color, mentorship,</p>

	<p>especially for students of color, and anti-racist training for professors. IBES adopts much of the language of the student DIAP and forms an internal DIAP committee.</p> <p>From this student organizing, Environmental Justice at Brown is founded. In the fall, EJ@B recruits people of color and begins to develop “Environmental Justice on College Hill,” an event aimed to annually educate Brown students about the history of environmental justice in Providence and at Brown.</p> <p>In November, three Brown students are arrested in nonviolent direct action at TD Bank in solidarity with Standing Rock against the financing of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).</p>
2017	<p>In response to years of student demands, IBES forms a joint student-teacher committee to develop an Environmental Justice track. The first draft of the track largely includes courses from Econ, Political Science, and other historically white, Western-focused departments.</p> <p>Students successfully pressure the committee to include additional Africana, Ethnic Studies, and Humanities courses in the department. <a href="#">The track</a> is available for students to concentrate in by Spring 2018.</p> <p>EJ@B works with the FANG Collective to pressure Brown to divest from Citizens’ Bank, which funded DAPL and other pipeline projects on indigenous land.</p>
2018	<p>In February, alumni from the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society (Klara Zimmerman, Sophie Duncan, Trevor</p>

Culhane, and Camila Bustos) write an [op-ed for BDH](#), describing Warren Kanders' company (Safariland) and its role in making military and police products used against protestors in Ferguson, Cairo, West Bank, and Standing Rock. Warren Kanders is a Brown alumni, member of the Presidential Advisory Council for IBES (appointed by President Paxson), and an active donor to the Brown Arts Initiative (including sponsoring an exhibit and lecture series on Protest).

Kanders responds with an [op-ed](#) in the BDH, dismissing any concerns about his company, Safariland, and aggressively denying any and all responsibility.

In November 2018, news coverage from *Hyperallergic* and others reports on the use of Safariland tear gas against migrants at the US-Mexico "border." Kanders refuses to resign as Vice Chairman of the Whitney Museum despite a letter signed by a hundred staffers. In December, the Brown Immigrant Rights Coalition publishes a [Statement of Solidarity with Migrant Caravans](#) in *Bluestockings* and highlights the violent role of Kanders and Safariland.

EJ@Brown hosts an April fundraiser for #NoLNGinPVD to support the ongoing resistance and activism.

[RISCC changes](#) into a chapter of Sunrise, a national movement of young people working for climate justice. Their main focuses are for greater political awareness of climate change and widespread adoption and implementation of the Green New Deal. Since founding, Sunrise at Brown and RISD has recruited students to attend large climate strikes;

	<p>organized protests and office visits to put pressure on the Governor of Rhode Island, Senator Whitehouse, Senator Reed, Representative Langevin, and Representative Cicilline; and helped support Sunrise's Northeast Regional Summit in September 2019 in Providence.</p>
2019	<p>During winter break, EJ@Brown works with other students and groups to launch the Warren Kanders Must Go campaign at Brown, led by the work of Decolonize This Place in New York. The coalition demands that Brown cut all ties with Warren and Allison Kanders and publicly denounce the use of tear gas at the US-Mexico "border." The coalition has unsuccessful meetings with President Paxson and Provost Locke, who minimize the violent border actions. Brown Divest campaign issues calls for divestment from Safariland due to its contribution to violence in Israel-Palestine.</p> <p>In February, Warren Kanders Must Go drop flyers throughout the Granoff Center during an art event to raise awareness about Warren B. Kanders' funding of and involvement with Brown University, and specifically, the Brown Arts Initiative (BAI). The coalition demands that the BAI cut all ties with Warren Kanders, CEO of Safariland, and reject all future donations. The coalition also demands that Brown University and the BAI release a statement condemning the violence in Israel-Palestine and at the US-Mexico "border." They post that they refuse to be complicit in state-sanctioned violence by taking money from and building the reputation of Warren Kanders.</p> <p>In March, Warren Kanders Must Go</p>

	<p>co-hosts a teach-in on Warren Kanders and Safariland with the Brown Immigrant Rights Coalition and Brown Divest. Throughout the spring, due to student pressure, the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society begins a process to create principles guiding their desired membership on the presidentially appointed Presidential Advisory Council and their donors. The Brown Arts Initiative plans a series of events on Arts, Ethics, and Philanthropy. Following the delivery of a complete timeline and numerous articles to President Paxson, the University still takes no action to cut ties with Kanders and denounce violence in Israel-Palestine and at the US-Mexico “border.”</p> <p>In October, Warren Kanders Must Go disrupted multiple events during Family Weekend. At an IBES panel focused on “sustainable investment”, WKMG asked provoking questions regarding the contradictory role Warren Kanders holds on the IBES Advisory Council and as a Brown Alum, and the fundamental incompatibility of using capitalism to “solve” environmental problems. The group also passed out flyers throughout multiple events and staged a banner drop on Faunce Steps and gave a brief statement at the beginning of a student tour.</p>
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## SO WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice shares roots with other justice movements that seek to end discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, migration status, class, and other intersecting identities. EJ advocates seek to work with frontline communities in achieving an equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens that do not disproportionately harm marginalized groups and envision a world without environmental hazards.



## CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Since 2007, environmental activism on campus has diverged from a more cohesive focus on lifestyle changes to include issues of environmental justice (EJ) and intersections with other groups and movements. Several different approaches have marked the evolution of the environmental movement on Brown's campus. Campaign focuses and goals differ castly between organizations. One distinction that has been particularly prominent has been the EJ-focused groups and the groups that are not EJ-focused. Another divergence exists between groups working closely with facilities and the administration and groups that work outside of the institution or in opposition to its current trajectory.

## EJ ORGANIZATIONS IN RHODE ISLAND

Environmental Justice League of RI (currently restructuring); the FANG Collective; No LNG in PVD; Groundwork Rhode Island

## Building a MFKN Movement!!!

This document is meant to be a movement building manual for organizers. This piece was adapted from a transcription of the Organizing for Substantive Change Workshop presented by Cameron Johnson '17 and organized by Liliana Sampedro '18 as well as past and current student experiences.

On the structure of this piece: not everything happens in the same order. Movement building isn't always a linear process. That said, we've ordered the content of this piece intentionally, and we hope that it gives you a helpful framework for thinking about organizing on campus.

### 1. Vision

Often folks have some intuitive sense of what they want to demand of the powers that be. It might be increases in pay or a more diverse student body or divestment from fossil fuel companies. Whatever the case may be, before deciding on what exactly it is that you want *in this moment*, it's important to spend some time thinking about what your vision for the future is, and making sure that **what you're building up today is consistent with the vision that you have for tomorrow**. For example, asking the University to build a new space for Black students might be inconsistent with a world where low-income Black people are free of gentrification.

Having a clear vision<sup>34</sup> of what you want the world to look like is also helpful when finding comrades. Working in a group of people who have a clear collective vision will be much easier when it comes to decision-making<sup>35</sup> than a group with very different long-term goals. For example, when deciding on how to support trans people in prisons, abolitionists and reformists have very different responses. Reformists say we should build prisons for trans people, and abolitionists say that we should end imprisonment. That's not to say you shouldn't attempt to build coalitions or find common ground with folks who have different moral or political philosophies, but in organizing collectives, it's important to discuss what your individual and collective visions are.

Think of your vision as a compass. Your vision is something that you can always return to when making decisions and deciding how to move forward.

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<sup>34</sup> You can also think of your vision as your long-term goals.

<sup>35</sup> Here are resources [one](#) and [two](#) on consensus based decision making.

*Activity: mission, vision, values! Break off into three groups and assign each group either mission, vision, or values. Brainstorm using chart paper and sticky notes words or phrases that come to mind when you think of your collective's mission, vision, or values. Come back to the large group, share, and discuss. Then pass your chart paper to another group. Let the group draft a statement based on their new chart paper, the content of the discussion, and their own thoughts. End by sharing each individual mission, vision, and values statements.*

## 2. Demands and Goal-Setting

Now that you have a vision and some sense of your long-term goals, it's time to formulate smart short-term goals and a corresponding set of demands.<sup>36</sup> If your vision for the university is open admissions, that might not be possible in the immediate future, but a smart incremental goal could be the introduction of a program for all University staff and their families to take courses at the university for free. It's worth noting that the exact wording of a demand might differ from your goal depending on your target, the role of negotiation, technical definitions, etc. The following are criteria upon which you should evaluate your short-term goals and the corresponding set of demands:

- **Specific**: so things cannot be repurposed or misrepresented by others, and so specific individuals are responsible for executing the demands and said individuals are accountable to a group of people who actually give a shit.
- **Measurable**: so progress can easily monitored.
- **Activating**: so that you can agitate people, elicit reactions, and generate momentum.
- **Realistic**: so folks don't get frustrated, preserving morale and ensuring folks feel like they have accomplished something, people take you seriously, so that failure isn't fated.<sup>37</sup>
- **Time-specific**: to put pressure, maintain commitment, strategic, we only have 4 years, accountability, seek progress, alleviate pain...

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<sup>36</sup> Your goals and demands might not be identical. Sometimes you might demand something in the hope that your target makes a compromise. Sometimes your goals might actually be a by-product of a particular set of demands, as opposed to an explicit facet of them.

<sup>37</sup> Is there room for negotiation or compromise? There doesn't always have to be, but whether there is not should impact how you navigate conversation with your target.

Vision (long-term goal)	Short-term goal	Demand
Redistribution of wealth	Creating a reparations fund of \$300,000 dedicated to supporting the education of students in Providence.	We demand that UCS increase the student activities fee by \$50 and use the funds generated by this change in policy to create a Reparations Fund dedicated to providing support for new and ongoing projects and initiatives in that Providence Public Schools District. The allocation of such funds should be governed by a committee of Brown students (especially those from the PPSD), PPSD teachers, and PPSD students.
Abolition of police and prisons	Removing all responsibilities from DPS other than those connected to their mandate as police officers (i.e. no more key delivery).	We demand the reallocation of job responsibilities such that the Brown University Department of Public Safety is not responsible for tasks not directly related to their mandate (i.e. the delivery of keys to students and responding to Emergency Medical Services calls). These responsibilities will be re-allocated to create new staff and student positions at the university.

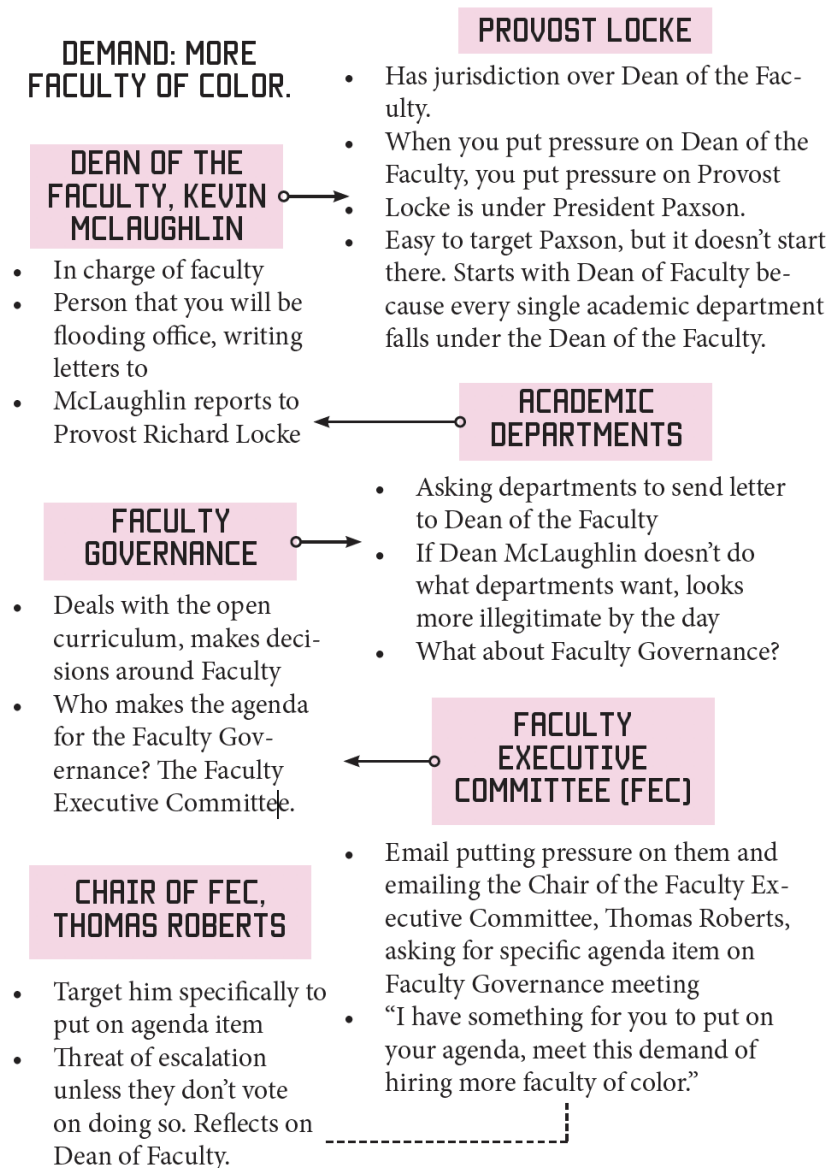
Make sure that any commitments made by the university are also held to these standards.

*Activity: Create a table similar to the one above, and make sure that all of your demands fall in line with your goals. Next, give all of your demands a ranking from 1-3, where 1 is non-negotiable, 2 is important but not essential, 3 is least important. Finally, for each demand, draft a compromise demand.*

### 3. The Campaign

Now it's time to plan the campaign. You've got a specific set of asks that align with your vision of the future, but who do you take it to? How can you maximize your chance of success? What's the timeline for your campaign? Here are some things you might want to think about when you're planning your campaign:

**Power Mapping** - who can actually give you what you're asking for? Mapping who has power (as it's related to your goals) will help determine where to apply pressure and who your targets are! The following is an example of a power map:



*Activity: create your own power map! Some folks like to put people on an x and y axis (where x is how supportive you think people will be and y is someone's power to impact the situation), some folks like to create a web with colored edges and bubbles indicating different types of relationships, levels of support, etc. You do you, gurl!*

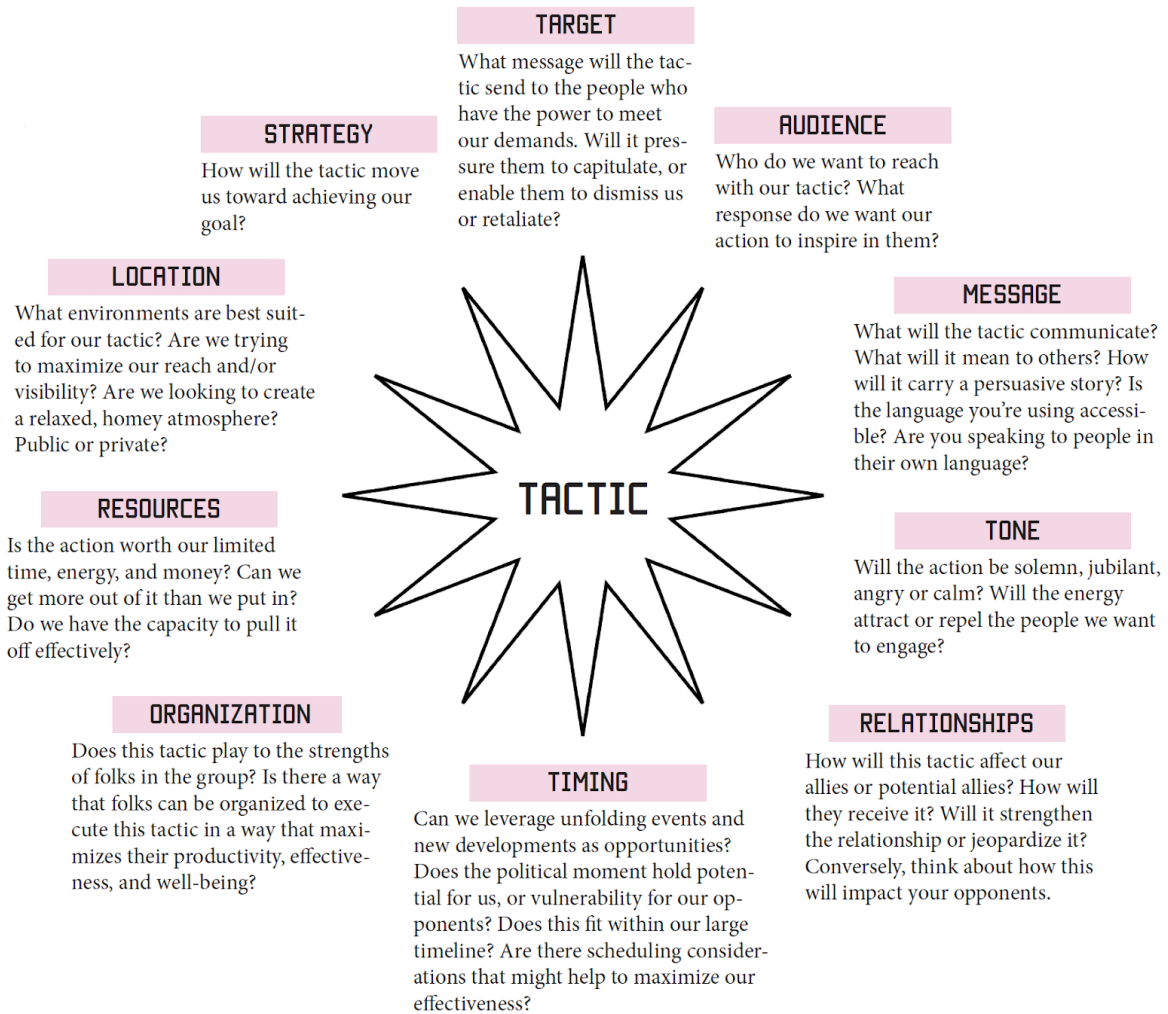
**Tactics** - how are you going to convince (or force) the powers that be to give you what you're asking for? This is really going to depend on your ask, the tone of your campaign, the capacity and positionality of your crew, etc. Here's a list of potential actions that you might take in service of your goal:

Letter and card writing	Letter and card delivery	Teach-in	Banner drop	Protest	Rally
Petition	Call-in	Film screening	Delegation	Flashmob	Bike tour
Run/walk	Meeting disruption	Marches	Vigil	Die-in	Concert
Boycott	Walkout	Social Media Bots	Fasting	Sit-in	Public demonstration/performance
Lockdown	Canvassing	Poster campaigns	Video announcements	Public forum/ town hall	Social media campaigns
Referendum	Studies and surveys	Op-eds and articles	Solidarity Actions	Crossover events	Strike

This is not an exhaustive list! Also, for the most part, these actions are relatively “safe” and traditional. Think outside of the box, and **don't be limited by the moral expectations of your oppressors.** Cuz when we go high, they go even lower.

*Activity: Create a tactic star! For each tactic that you're thinking about using, make a quick tactic star by answering the questions that correspond to each tip. If you don't want to make a literal star that's cool, but it's still valuable to evaluate your tactics using the questions below.*

### **Tactic Star**



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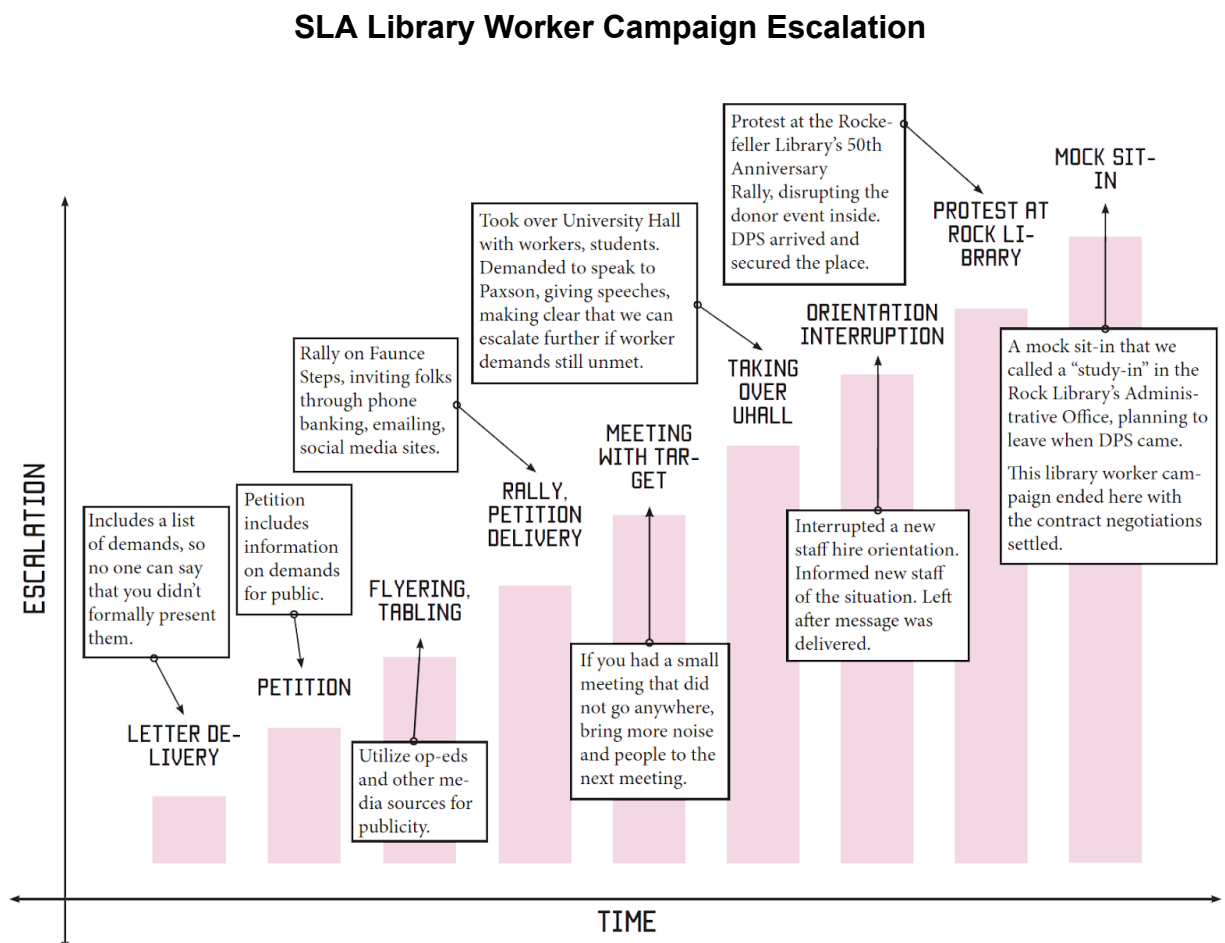
**Timeline & Escalation** - highkey, it's important to know when shit's gonna go down. Creating a comprehensive timeline gives folks an understanding of how much time they'll have for each task, and which things have to happen before others. It's worth noting that there's sometimes an unhealthy sense of urgency at Brown because our time here is relatively short and the administration's most effective tactic is to stall and wait us out. Given that, improving transitions from year-to-year will help to ensure that the knowledge and momentum necessary for the movement to continue is preserved.

Not only do we need to think about a timeline. We also need to think about how we're going to escalate. Escalation is important for a number of reasons. First, we don't want to start with something like a sit-in straight away because we need to spend time

<sup>38</sup> The tactic star graphic was inspired by another from the Free Cooper Union Disorientation Reader.

building momentum in order for it to be successful. Second, we don't want to use the most labor-intensive tactics first if other less demanding tactics might be just as successful.

*Activity: create a timeline and an escalation chart for your campaign! If you're tech savvy, try using [this](#) GitHub repository. This is the repository that supports the timeline for [Disability History at Brown](#). A sample escalation chart for the SLA Library Worker Campaign can be found below.*



#### 4. Other Tools and Practices

Tools	Practices
Task Sheets	Consensus based decision making.



Social Barometers	Be intentional about the ways that you use space (i.e. are we going to be sitting in a circle or classroom-style)
Press Logs	Dedicate time doing fun things/bonding with your organizing team
	Establish pods - lists of people that folks would want to support them if they experienced harm and hold them accountable if they caused harm
	Have rituals: do check-ins and/or grounding practices
	Use non-Brown emails and create a non-Brown google drive
	Give credit where credit is due

“I learned early that crying out in protest could accomplish things. My older brothers and sister had started to school when, sometimes, they would come in and ask for a buttered biscuit or something and my mother, impatiently, would tell them no. But I would cry out and make a fuss until I got what I wanted. I remember well how my mother asked me why I couldn’t be a nice boy like Wilfred; but I would think to myself that Wilfred, for being so nice and quiet, often stayed hungry. So early in life, I had learned that if you want something, you had better make some noise.”

– Malcolm X

“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world.  
And you have to do it all the time.”

– Angela Davis

“Those of us with experiences in the struggle have a historical responsibility to pass them on. Mistakes are the nursery of new ideas, so we must share them too; if we continue to hide and distort our errors, those coming after us will be condemned to repeat them. We cannot afford the luxury of leaving it up to historians to reveal what we did after fifty or one hundred years have passed. Present conditions demand we tell our stories now.”

– Donald L. Cox

### **Storytime: #BlackWalk50**

click [here](#) to listen to the #blackwalk50 interview series

By Amanda & Noell

#BlackWalk50 was mad complicated, and different folks will have different understandings of what exactly took place and why. Nonetheless, we wanted to offer our perspective and a brief summary of what took place. Things took off after an MPC workshop about Brown’s relationship to and complicity in white supremacy. Feeling emboldened, a group of students began organizing around the possibility of a walkout to Congdon Street Baptist Church. The purpose was to build upon the legacy of the Black student organizers from ‘68 and to shed light on how little Brown has done to address its relationship to white supremacy (in its many forms). As time went on, this possibility became a reality, but again, a complicated one. Most of the organizing took place on the DL out of fear that the administration might attempt to prevent the action and compromise the bargaining power that accompanies a group of angry undergrads. On top of that, the timeline was relatively short given that the 50th anniversary was less than 3 months away. Despite word-of-mouth recruitment and a(n admittedly inadequate) number of public info sessions, the time-crunched, DL nature of the organizing and the absence of a real political education effort created a disconnect between the organizers and the rest of the community. But the ball was ROLLING. On Sunday December 2nd, a [video](#) was released that demanded administration agree to [a list of demands](#) by Wednesday, December 5th. This generated a huge amount of attention on and off campus, and at that point, all eyes were on #BlackWalk50. Unfortunately but perhaps not surprisingly, there were disagreements within the Black community about how we should be moving forward, and there were a number of concerns and criticisms regarding Wednesday’s walkout. Many of these concerns were brought to light in a very intense Monday night meeting of much of the Black community. A second - much less intense - meeting took place the following night to decide how exactly we were going to reorient the action the following day. For better or for worse, the tone of the following day’s rally shifted from “bold action” to “commemorative celebration.” Some folks went so far as to describe the tone of the rally as one of “mourning.” And things went ahead.

We marched across campus and then to the Congdon. We stayed there for three days and two nights. Attendance was low at night, but a considerable number of folks came thru in the late afternoon/early evening period; folks from PSU and DARE came through to give workshops; there was lots of food and laughs and dancing and singing and even a little Christmas tree decorating! Absent the aforementioned bargaining power, conversations with administration were stalled until the Spring semester and many of the goals that we set out to meet at the beginning of our organizing were left unmet.

Based on what went well and what didn't we made a list of things to consider if you're tryna have shit pop off.

1. Maintain a clear vision and mission. Reiterate the vision and mission as often as you possibly can.
2. Always be working to strengthen your relationships with people. This will look different depending on the people you're trying to build relationships with, but building support, forming alliances, and expanding your team is always easiest when you have friendships with the people you're trying to engage.
3. Always be very very very intentional about your language and messaging because once a public statement is made it's impossible to redact.
4. Video announcements can garner a wide audience. If you plan on releasing a video (or making any type of large announcement), leak everything to news agencies early.
5. **Take notes and archive everything.**
6. Getting the support of relevant student organizations is valuable.
7. Get graduate students involved!
8. Lowkey, social status (clout) on campus matters. Think about it.
9. Get criticism early and always have channels available for people to provide criticism.
10. Do teach-ins about the issue your addressing. Make sure people understand relevant history, philosophy, public statements/demands, and the larger vision.
11. Treat every concern brought to the organizing collective as valid and important.
12. Create a GoFundMe, Venmo, PayPal, etc. People will donate money, and people at Brown have a lot of it. That said, do your best to make sure as much of it goes to the Providence community as possible.
13. The Black population at Brown is not a working class community and folks should act and organize accordingly.
14. President Paxson is much more effective via email and public statements than in-person.
15. Staff and faculty can be allies and accomplices. Know who is who.

16. Include the Providence community in ways that are sustained, meaningful, and beneficial to said community. Don't just come to folks asking for things or acting flaky. If you intend to include people, commit to it.
17. If you can find a lawyer to consult (for free), do it.
18. Don't use your Brown email to communicate sensitive or private information. That said, organizing in secret is not likely to be successful if you intend for the action to have a significant amount of engagement from the broader community. You can't bring as many people on board if it's a secret.
19. Be intentional about how you create spaces. Certain spaces are better suited to certain events, actions, conversations, etc.
20. At Brown, everyone wants to be a leader, but we need followers too!
21. During negotiations, make sure that you have all of the necessary and relevant people in the room. A common administrative stall tactic is creating a wild goose chase forcing students to jump between administrators and turning them into the "unreliable" middle-person.
22. Record everything - this perfectly allowed according to [Rhode Island law](#) but may violate [Brown's code of conduct](#) in certain situations (see D.12).
23. Some alumni will be supportive and some won't. Find the ones who are because your opposition will position alumni against you.
24. Get input from experienced student organizers (past and current), especially those from Brown. You want to acquire as much institutional knowledge as possible.
25. Prepare for things going terribly (actions that don't go to plan, divisions among organizers, social isolation, etc.). The emotional and psychological stress of organizing can be really overwhelming and that's not an accident.

We also want to share a set of recorded interviews and conversations about the walkout that we turned into a podcast! You can find the episodes [here](#).

Lastly, please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions about the walkout or would like us to put you in touch with other folks that were involved. We also have extensive records of the event and would be more than happy to share them with folks interested in the action!

## **Anti-Zionism and Palestinian Liberation Efforts @ Brown**

This is a revitalization of a piece in Brown's 2015 disorientation guide, which you can find [here](#).

Active from 2004 to 2006, Anti-Racist Action (ARA) was one of the first student groups to take up anti-zionist work on Brown's campus. ARA was unique in that their politics explicitly identified zionism as a white supremacist and colonial ideology. Despite its unpopularity on campus and the pervasiveness of pro-zionist rhetoric, ARA launched a divestment campaign in 2005 that was ultimately unsuccessful. Outside of their anti-zionist work, ARA also worked to challenge white supremacy on campus in other ways. Notably, they penned an article calling out Ruth Simmons and the "rainbow coalition," which they defined as "a form of white supremacy run by a 'progressive' ruling class including people of color."

Following ARA some years later, Brown Students for Justice in Palestine (BSJP) was established as a Palestine solidarity group working to raise awareness about issues related to Palestine and to diminish Brown's institutional complicity in human rights violations in the region. The group was first formed in 2009, in the wake of Israel's bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza, under the name "Break the Siege". Today, BSJP is one of over a hundred student chapters nationwide involved in Palestinian solidarity work. [Here](#) you can find BSJP's old website.

In 2011, after months of research, BSJP launched a campaign calling on Brown University to divest from twelve US companies profiting from or facilitating human rights violations against the Palestinian people. During that campaign, BSJP presented to the Advisory Committee on Corporate Responsibility in Investment Policy (ACCRIP) on multiple occasions, providing ample evidence of the companies' participation in the killing and displacement of civilians, the construction and maintenance of the illegal separation barrier and the expansion and maintenance of illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

A year later, after repeated delays, the ACCRIP released [a public letter](#) finally admitting that "Israel is indisputably engaged in ongoing systemic abuses of human rights and violations of international law." The ACCRIP ultimately failed to produce a recommendation to the Brown Corporation - despite the requirement to do so as mandated in [its founding charter](#) - largely due to a sustained effort by particular committee members and their allies to disrupt all committee operations rather than see a divestment recommendation come to the table.

In the spring of 2019, BSJP in conjunction with a number of other campus organizations launched the #BrownDivest campaign whose goal was to divest from a list of companies complicit in human rights abuses in Palestine.<sup>39</sup> #BrownDivest sought the passage of a student body referendum, and after months of tireless campaigning, the referendum passed with 69% of the vote. In response, Paxson - rather undemocratically - ignored the result of the referendum and stated via email:

I am opposed to divestment from companies that conduct business in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Brown's endowment is not a political instrument to be used to express views on complex social and political issues, especially those over which thoughtful and intelligent people vehemently disagree. As a university, Brown's mission is to advance knowledge and understanding through research, analysis and debate. Its role is not to take sides on contested geopolitical issues.

This email was followed by a response from nearly 100 faculty members asking Paxson to listen to the student body, which can be found here. In a UCS general body meeting that followed (which you can listen to here), Paxson further dismissed the referendum and went on to position the ACCRIP as the only legitimate channel for pursuing institutional redress in investment policy. At that point #BrownDivest had already presented to the ACCRIP and requested that the committee do the research necessary to produce a recommendation to divest. In lock step, Paxson and a number of faculty members set out to modify ACCRIPs scope and charge, overburdening it and channeling all of its recommendations to her own office instead of directly to the Corporation. #BrownDivest quickly alerted the faculty of Paxson's attempt to undermine the voices of community members, and the vote to decide on ACCRIPs change in scope and charge was postponed.<sup>40</sup>

In the fall of 2019, #BrownDivest continued its activism with a new target in mind: the ACCRIP. In an effort to strengthen the case for divestment, #BrownDivest created A Practical Guide to Divestment as a resource for ACCRIP. After a semester of working to build #BrownDivest's case and debating its critics, the ACCRIP voted on December 2nd, 2019 to recommend divestment. That recommendation was ultimately released in March of 2020.

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<sup>39</sup> Brown Jewish Voice for Peace was founded in Spring of 2018 to advance the call for Palestinian rights at Brown. JVP was a part of the #BrownDivest coalition, publishing an op-ed on the Jewish case for divestment, and hosting a forum on divestment. In Fall 2019, Brown Students for Israel is presenting to the ACCRIP in an attempt to smear the Divest coalition as antisemitic. Jewish Voice for Peace is planning on presenting their position at the meeting as well and countering BSI's presentation.

<sup>40</sup> Nour's oral history of BSJP: [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).



As the situation in occupied Palestine continues to deteriorate and human rights abuses remain a daily reality, BSJP's mission grows more urgent. Though this work has primarily approached Palestinian liberation by focusing on opposition to occupation, it is important to remember that this work is inspired and motivated by anti-zionist and anti-colonial political frameworks. Despite the institutional impotence of ACCRIP and President Paxson's work to undermine movements for divestment, BSJP and #BrownDivest continue to challenge Brown's role in the oppression of Palestinian people.

“Decolonization is not a metaphor.”

– Eve Tuck

“Oh my God, Karen! You can’t just ask the Corporation  
why they’re Zionist colonizers!”

– Gretchen Weiners



## The Pinkprint of Brown Divest

***\*All names and identifying information has been redacted  
\*If you have further questions or need other documents please contact  
browndivest@gmail.com***

### STEP ONE: CREATE A REVERSE TIMELINE

Depending on your campaign, demands, etc. it is helpful if your organization creates a timeline in reverse order. When is your big date? What do you want to have accomplished by that time? Our campaign began preparation over winter break and we knew our “big days” (highlighted in yellow). It is important that you start from your last date and make your way up. We had different google sheets for “pre-announcement tasks”, “after announcement tasks”, and “if UCS approves tasks” leading up to the student vote. It is important to separate these tasks so that your team members do not get overwhelmed at the quantity of tasks that need to be completed over a semester. Shade in gray as each week passes.

Week	Dates (Sun-Sun)	To Be Accomplished
1	01/20-01/27	Planning Meetings and Initial Task Delegation
2	01/27-02/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Announcement Tasks</li> </ul>
3	02/03-02/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Announcement Tasks</li> </ul>
4	02/10-02/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Announcement on Monday 2/11 and Wall Demonstration</b></li> <li>• After Announcement Tasks</li> <li>• <b>Events:</b> Divestment 101, Palestine-Kashmir Event on the 14th: 12-2 pm,</li> </ul>
5	02/17-02/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After Announcement Tasks</li> <li>• <b>Events:</b> Creative demonstration, Companies Workshop Motorola(Thurs 21st 4-5 pm Friedman 201)</li> </ul>
6	02/24-03/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After Announcement Tasks</li> <li>• <b>Events:</b> Divestment 101(2/27 at 12-130pm Petteruti), Potential Textron Demonstration</li> <li>• <b>02/27 UCS Presentation</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between UCS Presentation and UCS Decision tasks</li> </ul>
7	03/03-03/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between UCS Presentation and UCS Decision tasks</li> <li><b>Events:</b> Creative demonstration, Companies Workshop-Textron (Thurs 7th 4-5 pm Page Rob 503)</li> <li>03/04 Divestment 101 (UCS Reps) Smitty B 106 7-8 pm</li> <li><b>03/06 UCS Decision</b></li> </ul>
8	03/10-03/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IF UCS Approves tasks</li> <li>Settler Colonialism Workshop (Palestinians and Native Americans)</li> <li><b>Events:</b> Divestment 101</li> </ul>
9	03/17-03/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IF UCS Approves tasks</li> <li>Brown Progressive Action Committee Event</li> <li>Divestment 101</li> <li><b>Events:</b> Marc Lamont Hill on the 20th</li> <li><b>03/19-3/21 Student Body vote!</b></li> </ul>
--	Spring Break	

## STEP TWO: CREATE A CALENDAR

Keeping a calendar will help your team members see all events clearly. Make sure you shade in gray as each week passes.

### February

Sun	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesd ay	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10	11 Campaign Announcement + Wall Demonstration	12	13 Divest 101 7-8 @Saloom on 003	14 Kashmir- Palestine event 12-2  Meeting @ 8pm	15	16

17	18 HOLIDAY	19 HOLIDAY	20	21 Company Teach in @4-5 Page Robinson Meeting @ 8pm	22	23
24	25	26	27 Roadmap to Apartheid 7-9@fried man 201  UCS Presentat ion!!!	28 Meeting @ 8pm		

### March

Sun	Mon	Tuesda y	Wedne sday	Thursd ay	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Anti-Se mitism worksho p 4-5:30 @Kasse r Fox	4	5 DIVEST 101 for UCS member s BCSC 7-8pm	6 UCS Decide s to Move Forward or Not	7 Textron Worksh op  Meeting @ 8pm	8	9

10	11 Settler Colonial ism Event	12 Teach In on Kanders with Kanders Must Go 7:30-8:30 Friedma n 102	13	14 Meeting @ 8pm	15	16
17 UCS Debate 7-9pm List 120	18 DIVEST 101	19 VOTIN G START S AT NOON	20 Marc Lamont Hill 7-9	21 Social @ 8pm VOTIN G CLOSE S AT NOON, ANNOUNCED AT 10PM	22	23 SPRING BREAK!

### STEP THREE: KEEP A DELEGATION TASK SHEET

It is crucial to keep a centralized delegation task sheet so that all members know what is going on and can write their progress. We organized it by big dates (in red) and pre-announcement, post-announcement, etc. (in yellow). Members' names are redacted. Strategy team should assign due dates and check in to see if there is progress on the events and reach out to individuals to check in.

	Name	Date	Additional Comments	Progress
<b>To Do List</b>				
<b>Pre-Announcement</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Additional</b>	<b>Progress</b>

TASKS			Comments	
Print flyers				X has flyers
Video Content and Production		Sunday 02/10	*Sweaters will come latest 02/05	Last editing, to be done by sunday
Website		Sunday 02/10		X finished, last editing
Figure out UCS Dates		-		Done
Editing of handbook		Thursday 02/07		In final edits
Flyer for all events		-	Flyer (logo, thesis, FB link) to distribute at all events	DONE
Create Brown Divest Facebook page		Release 02/11		Created (unpublished)
Talking points for allied groups (creating the content)		Friday 02/08		Done
Email of Divestment meeting				Done
Stickers				DONE
Petition				Done
<b>ANNOUNCEMENT ON Monday, 02/11</b>	FB page--> X post all 3 on Monday. 9am/10am/noon		First post with just video and link to handbook. Second post promoting Divest 101. Third post promoting Kashmir/Palestine event.	
<b>After Announcement</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>	<b>Progress</b>



Maintain Brown Divest FB page		ongoing	Calendar, divestment updates, get for signatures	
Reaching out and Presenting to student orgs	EVERY ONE	ongoing		
UCS Presentation practice		02/27	Wednesday 2/20 6-7 meeting to divide roles/finalize presentation	Sunday 2/24 11-12 mock presentation
UCS presentation creation		02/27		X meeting Sunday or Monday to work on it
Edit website			Reflect new petitions, upload PDF handbook	DONE
Online petition for undergrads/grads/faculty?				Done
Petition of 300 signatures		02/27		DONE, but make sure all undergrads.
<b>UCS Presentation ON Wednesday, 02/27</b>	Five people	02/27	* 5 people max. Good, engaging, and energetic public speaking skills	20 minute presentation, 20 minute questions
<b>Between UCS Presentation and UCS Decision (02/27 - 03/06)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Reaching out and Presenting to student orgs	EVERY ONE	ongoing		
<b>UCS APPROVES</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Additional</b>	<b>Progress</b>

on 03/06!			Comments	
Brown Divest 101	X	3/18/2019 7-8		Still need to decide on a date/time/place and ask who can present.
Marc Lemont Hill + Sa'aed Atshan Event	X	March 20 Macmillan 117 7-9	5:45-6:30 dinner meeting him before	
BDH article to vote in favor of Brown Divest	X			
UCS DEBATE	Five people			
Get your friends to vote!	EVERY ONE			
Emails to students orgs to get members to vote on election day	EVERY ONE			
Table at Blue Room for voting!	X			
<b>Student Body VOTE on 3/19-3/21</b>				
Events				
The Wall demonstration		Feb. 11 9-4pm	Sign up for shifts!!	
Palestine-Kashmir solidarity event		Feb. 14 12-2 pm	Attend event!	
Divestment 101		Feb 13 7-8 Salomon 203		We have enough presenters for the 1st week and we booked a room.
Company Workshop		Feb. 21 4-5		We made the

		pm at Friedman 201		structure of the 1st presentation (Motorola) and are still working on the slides.
Roadmap to Apartheid: From South Africa to Palestine		27th (Wednesday) from 7-9pm in Friedman 201		
Understanding Anti-Semitism		3/3, 4-5:30 pm Kasser Fox		
Divestment 101 (Round Two)		3/5 BCSC 7-8pm		
Textron Workshop with Brown War Watch		Thursday, 03/07 7-8 Friedman 208		
Settler Colonialism and the Indigenous Struggle in USA and Israel		Monday, 3/11 6:30-8 SmittyB108		
Kanders and Safariland Teach in	X in coordinat ion with Kanders Must Go	3/12 7:30-8:30 Friedman 102		

### GOOGLE DRIVE ORGANIZATION:

Use a google drive with ALL documents, logos, correspondence, and more centralized in one location. Use members' personal gmail account instead of Brown's gmail, which Brown has access to. Organize your documents in the following way:

- **Advertisement:**
  - Logos
  - Pamphlets
  - Posters
  - Video
  - Op-ed drafts
- **Emails**
  - List of faculty emails
  - List of your own organization's members' emails
  - Any email template for mass messaging
- **Events and Speakers**
  - Each event should have a separate google doc with more specific logistics and signup sheets for members
  - In the mega delegation task sheet, place these sign up sheets under the corresponding event's "additional comments"
- **Internal Socials/Self-Care**
  - Document on social ideas
- **Meeting Notes**
  - All notes for your organization's meetings
  - Notes of meetings with administrators, other students, event feedback, etc.
- **Research Group**
  - If this is applicable, there should be a folder with research material for your campaign's content
- **Solidarity Building**
  - List of student organizations and their emails

~Not in any folder:

- **Keep your delegation task sheet, calendar, and reverse timeline OUT of any folder so that they are easily accessible and because these are macro-strategy documents.**

**List of Student Organizations and their Emails:**

Group	Group Email	Brown Divest Point Person	Point Person from the Club	Meeting Time/Place	Status
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<b>Students Organize for Syria</b>					
<b>Brown Students for Justice in Palestine</b>					
<b>Brown Jewish Voice for Peace</b>					<b>Messaged personally</b>
<b>Railroads</b>				<b>2/20 8-8:30 pm, sayles 200</b>	<b>sent email</b>
<b>Kashmir Solidarity Movement</b>					
<b>Natives Americans at Brown</b>					<b>Sent email</b>
<b>First-Gens@Brown</b>					<b>Sent email</b>
<b>Brown Iranian Students Association (BISA)</b>					<b>Sent email, messaged personally</b>
<b>Lecture Board E-Board</b>					<b>Messaged personally</b>
<b>Brown University Chapter of the NAACP</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>SWANA Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>

<b>Asian American Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>Latinx Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>Multiracial Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>Native American Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>Black Heritage Series</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>SHAPE (Sexual Health Advocacy through Peer Education)</b>					<b>Sent email</b>
<b>Asian/American Political Alliance</b>					
<b>Bengali Students' Club</b>					<b>Messaged personally</b>
<b>Brown Asian Sisters Empowered</b>				<b>2/25 7pm/Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Brown Muslim Students' Association</b>					<b>Messaged personally</b>
<b>United Muslim Artists &amp; Designers (RISD)</b>					<b>Sent email</b>

<b>La Alianza Latinx</b>					<b>Sent email</b>
<b>Dominican Students at Brown</b>					<b>Sent Email</b>
<b>Brown-RISD Arab Society</b>					<b>Sent Email</b>
<b>Campaign for Burma</b>					<b>Keep reading my messages but don't answer so i'm assuming they won't sign</b>
<b>Brown Italian Students Organisation</b>					<b>Personally messaged</b>
<b>The Post</b>					<b>sent email</b>
<b>Mezcla</b>					<b>Personal contact, will get back to me soon</b>
<b>Black Student Union</b>					<b>Sent email</b>
<b>French House</b>					<b>Will not sign (some members objected)</b>
<b>Alpha Chi Omega</b>					<b>Will not sign (can't take a political stand)</b>

## Notes from the Student Labor Alliance

### What is labor justice?

Labor justice at Brown isn't just about supporting unions and Brown workers! Labor justice means improving workplace conditions, redistributing profits, and creating collective ownership. Labor justice means anti-sweatshop campaigns [TEXT BOX POP OUT: such as [United Students Against Sweatshops](#), a student movement started in 1998 that sought to end university contracts with sweatshops] and worker cooperatives [TEXT BOX POP OUT: like [Healthy Planet Cleaning Cooperative](#), started with the help of immigrant workers center [Fuerza Laboral](#) in Central Falls, Rhode Island]. [TEXT BOX POP OUT: A worker cooperative is a non-hierarchical business model that is **collectively-owned** and **democratically-controlled** by its employees (not a CEO).]

### Why Unions Matter

#### *Pay and Economic Gains*

Put simply, union workers get paid more. Union wage rules also require that workers who do the same work get the same pay. This reduces the racist and sexist pay differentials that result from individual raises.

Not only do they make more per hour, workers with strong union contracts are also provided with important benefits like health care and retirement pensions. These benefits are worth thousands of additional dollars a year.

#### *Power in the Workplace*

In addition to giving workers the tools to win higher wages and benefits, unions increase worker power and control in the workplace. For one, they provide protections against arbitrary firing practices. This means that workers can hold superiors and coworkers accountable for sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other abuses of power with less fear of retaliation. Contract negotiations and collective worker actions also enable workers to make their work, which takes up much of their lives, more livable.

Ideally, unions also protect against the coercive threats or firing practices that often keep undocumented workers from reporting abuses. In practice, many unions still have racist inclusion practices that prevent many undocumented workers from joining. SLA supports explicitly anti-racist worker solidarity and recognizes the troubled history of



many American unions. At the same time, SLA recognizes unions' importance—historic and current—in raising the material conditions of workers of color, and their potential for building powerful interracial coalitions of working people.

### *Building Working Class Power*

Unions are critical to building working class power as a whole. They represent some of the only political organizations that are democratically controlled and funded by working class people. Unlike many non-profits, they are accountable to their members, rather than to wealthy donors. And, through constant struggle, unions can teach their members how to organize effectively. This gives people who are often excluded from the political process the ability to fight the battles that matter most to them—inside and outside of the workplace.

### **The Structure of Labor at Brown:**

#### *USAW RI*

Over 500 workers at Brown are represented by [United Service and Allied Workers of Rhode Island](#), which was formed in 2003. The three bargaining units are dining, facilities, and the library. Many temporary and contract workers at Brown are not unionized.

#### *Dining services*

Brown Dining Services is co-managed by Bon Appetit, a private company. After the partnership began in 2016, many workers experienced an intensification of their workload without a proportional increase in compensation. There is concern that the company's influence over the workplace may be increasing.

#### *Academic labor*

Brown depends on the precarious labor of undergraduate TAs, graduate students, and adjunct instructors. After sustained organizing efforts, graduate student employees voted to unionize in 2018. They are now represented by Stand Up for Graduate Student Employees (SUGSE) and the American Federation of Teachers.

#### *Student employment*

Every part of the university – from dining services and the library to ADOCH and academic departments – also depends on both the revenue and labor of students. According to a [2019 survey](#), over 20 percent of students work more than ten hours a week. The student minimum wage for the 2018-19 academic year was \$10.60 per hour, just ten cents above Rhode Island's minimum wage.

### **SLA Mission/Goals**

Student Labor Alliance works on issues of labor justice in solidarity with workers at Brown, in Rhode Island, and other communities connected to the university.

### **Recent Campaigns**

- Fighting for air-conditioning in the Ratty dining hall
- Supporting university employee contract negotiations
- Solidarity with Student-Farmworker Alliance and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Boycott of Wendy's
- Work with United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) to take on exploitative clothing companies that sell their merchandise at Brown

### **Upcoming Campaigns**

We have two major campaigns coming up this year!

- 1) We're working with Rhode Island Jobs with Justice, Fuerza Laboral, and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades to fight for fair wages for construction workers at Brown.
- 2) We're working with United Students Against Sweatshops as part of a national campaign to get Brown to sever its contracts with several clothing manufacturers that operate through exploitative labor practices.

### **Contact Info**

Email [brownusla@gmail.com](mailto:brownusla@gmail.com) to subscribe to our mailing list and get involved!

You can find us on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/BrownStudentLaborAlliance/>

“If you dare to struggle, you dare to win. If you dare not struggle,  
then damn it, you don’t deserve to win.”

– Fred Hampton

## The Brownopticon

By Noël Cousins

*“Study after study has shown that human behavior changes when we know we’re being watched. Under observation, we act less free, which means we effectively *\*are\** less free.”— Edward Snowden*

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### “Do you have a non-Brown email?”

If you’ve ever participated in political organizing on Brown University’s campus, there’s a good chance you’ve heard something akin to the question, “Do you have a non-Brown email?” While this practice isn’t ubiquitous, it’s become one of the most common counter-surveillance practices used by activists on Brown’s campus. Nonetheless, there’s a significant subset of the activist community that doesn’t see the need to engage in counter-surveillance measures at all, often citing the logistical difficulty of switching communication platforms and the rare incidence of actually being surveilled.

In this paper, I argue that the extent of the University’s surveillance capacity is enough to warrant the adoption of a more robust set of counter-surveillance practices and would serve to (1) mitigate the panoptic effect of the University’s surveillance capacity and to (2) protect against administrative abuses of power.

## The Brownopticon

### *Background and the Interests of Administrators*

In order to understand today’s questions about the surveillance of student activism, they must be contextualized in its long history, which begins its most colorful chapter in the 20th century. Between Cold War McCarthyism and the repression of the broad range of leftist and progressive organizing in the latter half of the 20th century (i.e. civil rights, Black power, feminism, gay rights, socialism, anti-war, etc.), there was no shortage of student movements being surveilled and sabotaged. Thanks to the Freedom of Information Act and (perhaps even more so) the bravery of whistleblowers like the Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI, activists and scholars have been able to uncover the incredible impact that government surveillance has had on student activism.

The most notable FBI program to engage in the surveillance of student activism is none other than the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Responsible for the suppression of subversive political activity, the COINTELPRO targeted organizations associated with a broad range of political ideas, including but not limited to civil rights and Black nationalism, socialism, communism, (the amorphous) New

Leftism, Puerto Rican Independence, etc.<sup>41</sup> Student organizations were not exempt from this surveillance, and targets included the Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Students for Democratic Society (SDS), Black student unions, and the like.<sup>42</sup>

To meet their ends, the COINTELPRO engaged in a variety of tactics to undermine these groups' success, but they are best surmised by Brian Glick who identifies four of their primary strategies: infiltration, psychological warfare, legal harassment, and extralegal violence.<sup>43</sup> One example of this undermining was the FBI's attempt to forge correspondence and sew distrust between participants at an NYU demonstration in 1969. SDS members had joined Black students at NYU who were protesting the firing of a Black professor. SDS members received a letter from the FBI (pretending to be an "unnamed SDS member") that urged them to abandon the protest because of alleged anti-Semitic remarks of the professor and his supporters.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps more shockingly, the FBI has even gone so far as to provoke activists to incite violence. In May of 1970, nine students were arrested for the bombing of an ROTC building at Hobart College after being instructed and provoked by an FBI agent, Thomas Tongyai.<sup>45</sup> While cases of this severity are relatively rare, the more banal forms of monitoring were ubiquitous. Bringing things a bit closer to home, David Kertzer, a professor and alumnus of Brown, reported to the Brown Daily Herald that during the 1960s he led an anti-war group called the Campus Action Council, which he discovered (years later) was being monitored by the FBI.<sup>46</sup>

While the US government was the primary executor of these surveillance activities, instrumental to their effectiveness was the cooperation of university administrators. This cooperation is often superficially understood as a matter of policy, but Sigmund Diamond complicates this understanding by exploring the relationship between Harvard's research and administrative interests and the surveillance that took place on its campus during the 1940s and 50s. Diamond writes about Harvard's relationship with the FBI:

For Harvard, there was the opportunity to establish connections with agencies that could hire its students, suggest projects, help to finance them —though at arm's length— and solve some of the problems of conducting research abroad at a time when that was both politically and financially difficult.<sup>47</sup>

In this way, the intersecting interests of university administrations and the US intelligence community led to the formation of an intelligence-university complex, the remnants of which are abundant today.

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<sup>41</sup> Glick, *War at Home*, 10-12.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>45</sup> Churchill and Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers*, 222.

<sup>46</sup> Luthra, "Police monitoring 'could happen' without U. awareness."

<sup>47</sup> Diamond, *Compromised Campus*, 50.

### *Students' Right to Privacy*

Despite their history of surveilling students, the federal government and university administrations are (arguably) bound by a set of legal strictures related to the privacy of students. Of course, the most significant statute related to the privacy of any American is **the Fourth Amendment of the US constitution**, which reads as follows:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Because of rapid changes in communication technology, the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Fourth Amendment has dramatically shifted in the last century. In *Olmstead v. United States*, the Supreme Court ruled that warrantless wiretapping enacted by the government was permissible.<sup>48</sup> In 1967, however, the Court reversed its decision in *Katz v. United States* and ruled that the government's placement of an eavesdropping device inside a public phone booth—with the goal of listening to self-incriminating conversation—constituted an unreasonable search under the Fourth Amendment.<sup>49</sup> Notably, the Court decided that the Fourth Amendment was a protector of people not places (a shift from *Olmstead v. United States*) and that the government's conduct violated Katz's "reasonable expectation to privacy."<sup>50</sup> In Justice Harlan's opinion, a test was outlined to determine whether a reasonable expectation of privacy exists.<sup>51</sup> The test consists of two criteria: (1) whether a person has exhibited an actual (subjective) expectation of privacy, and (2) whether society views the expectation as reasonable (objective).<sup>52</sup> Given the relevance of universities to civic engagement and free inquiry, it is typically understood that university students in the US have a reasonable expectation of privacy.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the protections afforded by the Fourth Amendment, **the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act** (FERPA) created additional protections for student's educational records. Signed into law in the aftermath of Watergate and the atmosphere of government distrust it inspired, FERPA applies to all educational institutions that receive federal funding and prohibits said institutions from disclosing the educational records of their students without their consent (or the consent of their parents if the student is a minor).<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, this mandate includes a range of exceptions. Of these exceptions, three are particularly notable in relation to the surveillance of student activism. First, FERPA does not include "directory information"

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<sup>48</sup> Siddiqui, National Security Frat Party, 462.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Family Educational And Privacy Rights Act, 20 U.S. Code § 1232g (1974).

(things like name, phone number, and address) in its definition of educational records and so this information can be disclosed without a student's consent.<sup>55</sup> Second, universities are allowed to disclose a student's educational records to a university official if that official has a legitimate educational interest.<sup>56</sup> While this seems rather benign, the definition of "university official" and "legitimate educational interest" is left up to the university, and in Brown's case, these definitions are incredibly vague. Brown's definition of a university official includes members of the corporation, four categories of employees (administrative, supervisory, academic, and support staff), any student serving on an official committee, and any person or company with whom the university has a contract.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps even more vague is the definition of legitimate educational interest: "a University official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility."<sup>58</sup> Third, Brown is allowed to nonconsensually disclose a student's educational records in the event of a "health or safety emergency" provided the "release [is] narrowly tailored considering the immediacy, magnitude, and specificity of information concerning the emergency."<sup>59</sup> Despite the strict requirements for health and safety disclosures, universities have used this exception with a great deal of discretion since 9/11.<sup>60</sup> Within a few months of the attack, the FBI (with the help of university administrators) investigated hundreds of university campuses collecting information about students who were perceived as Muslim and Muslim student organizations.<sup>61</sup> As one might expect, these arbitrary investigations did not lead to the discovery of terrorist activity.<sup>62</sup>

Brown is officially beholden to the Fourth Amendment and FERPA, but the university's computing policies, which are "agreed to" by all students who choose to attend the institution, provide important insight into the university's official treatment of students' electronic data and communication. The two most consequential policies for student activists are **the Email Policy and the Emergency Access to Accounts and Information policy**, which arrived just a month after the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007.<sup>63</sup> Together these policies allow for the arbitrary inspection of student email accounts, and while the justification for such inspections appears to be motivated by an attempt to monitor violations of the acceptable use policy, "Brown has the authority to access and inspect the contents of any equipment, files or email on its electronic systems."<sup>64</sup> Further, the procedure outlined in the Emergency Access to Accounts and Information Policy only requires that the request for information be approved by the Vice President

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Brown University, "Brown University FERPA Policy."

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Siddiqui, National Security Frat Party, 470-471.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Brown University, "Computing Policy for Brown University."

<sup>64</sup> Brown University, "Email Policy."

of Campus Life and the Director of IT Security.<sup>65</sup> This same procedure is followed when acquiring access to files on Brown's local servers or Google Suite.

### *Brown's Surveillance Capacity*

Brown is like a mini-city. It provides a wide range of essential services to its students (i.e. housing, healthcare, food, education, etc.), and as a pre-condition for receiving those services, students must interface with the record-keeping and surveillance infrastructure of the university. This allows the university to amass a great deal of information about its students, and while the university is officially using this information in ways that are beholden to the legal strictures outlined above, the possibility of misuse begs the question: if an administrator broke the rules and had the power to access every piece of information that Brown has collected about someone (or some group), what could they learn? Therefore, the following is an elaboration of the university's surveillance capacity and the information that a hypothetical administrator might be able to glean if it were misused:

Educational Records - First, all directory information (much of which is personally identifiable information) is not protected by FERPA and is able to be released to third parties without the consent of students.<sup>66</sup> Directory information includes but is not limited to name, local and home addresses, phone number, email address, photographic, video or electronic images, date and place of birth, field of study, dates of attendance, enrollment status, assistantships and fellowships, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, relationship to an alumnus or alumna of the University, etc.<sup>67</sup> Second, educational records (which are only to be disclosed with student consent or under one of many exceptions to FERPA's privacy protections) are maintained for amounts of time that are dictated by the university's (somewhat outdated) record retention schedule.<sup>68</sup> These records include traditional academic records and transcript information, admission materials, disciplinary records, name change authorizations, etc.<sup>69</sup> The magnitude and sensitivity of this information cannot be understated. Information breaches related to educational records could severely undermine a person's safety and wellbeing.

The Brown ID Card - a Brown student's ID card allows them to access a variety of university services, including but not limited to library book lending, printing, meal plan, building access, etc. According to Brown's Director of IT Security, the systems that manage these services are independent ecosystems that rarely have their logs exported or included in the university's security information event manager (SIEM).<sup>70</sup> That said, the export of this data is not unfeasible given the record-keeping infrastructure that exists in these ecosystems. It's relatively easy for a student to

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<sup>65</sup> Brown University, "Emergency Access to Accounts and Information."

<sup>66</sup> Family Educational And Privacy Rights Act, 20 U.S. Code § 1232g (1974).

<sup>67</sup> Brown University, "Brown University FERPA Policy."

<sup>68</sup> Brown University Archives, "Brown University Record Retention Schedule."

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Mark Dieterich (IT Security Director at Brown University) discussion with author, December 2019/



examine their own printing, checkout, or dining dollar history, and while individuals have no way of examining their building access logs, the Brown Department of Public Safety (DPS) uses these logs in order to identify participants engaging in suspicious behavior on campus.<sup>71</sup> While a person's dining dollar spending and library check out history are not the most consequential wells of information, building access and printing logs can be somewhat more sensitive. Building access logs would allow an administrator to effectively recover or track a person's approximate location at any given moment; printing logs might allow an administrator to see what flyers, pamphlets, posters, or other materials that students are printing in service of their activism.

Video Cameras - over the last two decades, Brown's campus has seen a dramatic increase in its video surveillance infrastructure or closed-circuit television (CCTV) system. According to the Brown Daily Herald, there were about 60 active cameras on the university's campus in 2000.<sup>72</sup> By 2008, that number had risen to 180,<sup>73</sup> and in a 2013 report from the Campus Security Task Force that number had risen to an incredible 430 cameras and 47 DVRs (digital video recorder and storage units).<sup>74</sup> The report goes on to discuss plans for expanding the campus's video surveillance infrastructure and highlights the positive impact it's had on the department. The report reads, "updated CCTV technology has proven to be an invaluable asset for the department in apprehending suspects and solving crimes. Several of our robbery arrests were a direct result of our camera system identifying suspects and/or vehicles during an investigation."<sup>75</sup> Without a map of the camera placements, it is difficult to imagine the geography that 470 cameras are able to cover, but given their placement in "high-traffic areas," the power of these cameras to monitor the movement and activities of students is staggering.

Smartphone Location Tracking - all Brown students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to sign up for the BrownAlert system. In moments of crisis, the BrownAlert system is used by DPS to notify individuals of said crisis and provide instructions to ensure their safety. Obviously, a catalog of cell phone numbers in the hands of law enforcement officers might raise a few red flags for privacy-conscious individuals, especially. Only in 2018 did the Supreme Court rule against the government's unrestricted access to smartphone location data.<sup>76</sup> Prior to this, DPS would have been able to purchase this data from third-party companies like Securus, effectively making them able to identify the location of any member of the Brown community signed up for the BrownAlert system.<sup>77</sup> While this is no longer legally possible, other threats to privacy continue to emerge in relation to smartphone location tracking (e.g. the use of aggregated anonymous location data to monitor social distancing and travel patterns).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Brown Department of Public Safety, "Brown Building Security Initiative (BBSI)."

<sup>72</sup> Elliott, "Surveillance cameras on campus triple."

<sup>73</sup> Elliott, "Surveillance cameras on campus triple."

<sup>74</sup> Brown University Campus Safety Task Force, "Interim Report."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Williams, "Supreme Court says police can't use your cellphone to track you without a court order."

<sup>77</sup> Valentino-DeVries, "Service Meant to Monitor Inmates' Calls Could Track You, Too."

<sup>78</sup> Tau, "Government Tracking How People Move Around in Coronavirus Pandemic."

As the law continues to evolve on these issues, it's possible that gaps in legislation or corporate loopholes could be used to give DPS access to students' smartphone location data.

Email and File Storage - perhaps the topic most relevant to the discourse in activist communities, the surveillance of email and file storage is rather straightforward. Any information that exists within the Brown Google Suite or on Brown's own servers is within the administration's power to read, provided a request is approved by the Vice President of Campus Life and the Director IT Security.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, if a person is using the default settings of Google Calendar, any other members of the Google Suite is able to access that person's calendar and check to see when they are busy or available. Given the centrality of the Google Suite to a student's life on campus, it not difficult to imagine the wealth of information that could

It is worth noting that the operations of DPS are relatively independent of the university's administration, and the administration would require the cooperation of DPS if it were to take advantage of some of the capacities described above. Further, this independence means that DPS is also able to engage in other forms of monitoring or data collection without the administration's knowledge — if it so chooses.

## **No Snowden**

### *Use, Abuse, and Trust*

As was mentioned above, the administrators of the university are beholden to a set of legal guidelines and institutional policies that codify students' right to privacy. Thus, the surveillance capacity of the university is not something that is officially allowed to be wielded by its administrators without good reason. Notwithstanding, the belief that administrators abuse the university's surveillance power is not uncommon. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- (1) Some student organizers have developed a distrust of the institution because of their personal experiences with being surveilled by it, and many others have inherited this distrust from their friends, comrades, and elders.
- (2) A history of universities cooperating with the intelligence community in addition to contemporary iterations of this cooperation (i.e. Muslim surveillance post-9/11 and the FBI's Academic Alliance programs) has lead many to believe that the surveillance of student activism is an unofficial, no less present reality.
- (3) Brown's administration has had a history of official and unofficial policies that are in conflict with one another. For example, in November of 2014, the Guardians of Peace leaked a mass of confidential data from Sony Pictures. In this leaked data were email exchanges that severely undermine the integrity of Brown's admissions process. In one of the aforementioned emails, the President of the

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<sup>79</sup> Brown University, "Email Policy."

University outlines to members of the Brown Corporation the procedure for indicating applicants whose materials they believe require “special handling.”<sup>80</sup> The President goes on to articulate the importance of maintaining the reputation of the university and the problems that might arise if the unofficial policy of the university were to come to light. She writes:

Although your role as a representative of Brown means you learn about spectacular candidates, it may also place you in a number of awkward situations. One that requires special attention is when a family mentions a gift to Brown in the context of their child's admission. Even the appearance of linking gifts to admissions poses a serious risk to Brown's reputation.<sup>81</sup>

Ironically, the leaked emails also contain an exchange between administrators of the university (including the President) and Michael Lynton, the director of Sony Pictures, where Lynton confirms a donation of \$250,000 to the university and also requests the “special handling” of his daughter's application.<sup>82</sup> She graduated in 2019.

Therefore, while there have been no Snowden-esque whistleblowing revelations related to the surveillance of students and/or student activism, the relationship between administrators and students is often one of justifiable distrust.

In a survey that I conducted of student organizers, the majority of students surveyed thought that the university kept tabs on students and/or student organizations. When asked about the impact that surveillance has had on their organizing, a number of students mentioned that the suspicion or fear of surveillance (not necessarily the incidence of surveillance) shaped a great deal of how members communicated and engaged with one another. A number of respondents also discussed the attempts made by the Office of Student Conduct (while meeting with known members of student organizations) to identify participants in certain actions in order to dole out punishments. Another respondent said, “desires to remain under the radar have inhibited coalition building and outreach efforts [and] decisions to rely on more covert communication strategies also create an air of imminent danger that shapes the organizing culture.” When asked about counter-surveillance practices they've used or encountered, the most common response included non-Brown emails and Signal, but some students also mentioned the avoidance of Brown's WiFi altogether and the use of privacy-conscious platforms like ProtonMail.

Evidently, student organizers' fear of being surveilled shapes their organizing.

### *On the Panopticon*

Articulated first in the 18th century by Jeremy Bentham, the panopticon is an institutional design wherein all of the individuals in the institution are able to be watched

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<sup>80</sup> Paxson, “Fwd: Letter to the Brown Corporation from President Paxson.”

<sup>81</sup> Paxson, “Fwd: Letter to the Brown Corporation from President Paxson.”

<sup>82</sup> Lynton, “Re: Brown University / Wire” and “Re: April 1 campus visit.”

by a single security guard without any of the individuals being able to tell whether they are being watched.<sup>83</sup> While a single security guard would be unable to watch every individual simultaneously, the individuals within the institution would not be able to tell whether they were being watched at any given moment and so would act as if they were being watched all the time. This type of regime is designed to induce self-regulation and self-censorship among the people residing inside of it. The architecture that Bentham elaborated consisted of a rotunda with a central observatory, and while it's most commonly associated with prisons, Bentham maintained that the design was applicable to a whole range of institutions, including but not limited to factories, hospitals, and universities.<sup>84</sup>

Popularized by Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish*, the panopticon has since been taken up by a range of scholars and is often used as a metaphor to illustrate the impact of mass surveillance on human behavior and self-censorship.<sup>85</sup> Critics of mass surveillance argue that video cameras and other electronic surveillance technologies have lead to a panoptic effect in the spaces where they are utilized. The titular metaphor "Brownopticon" is meant to highlight the panoptic effect of the university's extensive surveillance infrastructure and the damage that it does not just to the "free-thinking" and "liberal" ideals of the university but the activism that has become part of its brand.

### *Panoptic Culture and Respectability*

Having illustrated Brown's extensive, panoptic surveillance capacity as well as the distrust and fear of administrative abuse that has emerged within activist communities, it's clear that regardless of whether surveillance is actually taking place on campus or not, this combination of capacity and suspicion is having a deleterious effect on campus activism.

Like most institutions, things that threaten Brown's reputation or finances are often directly or indirectly criminalized by its administration or governing body. Consequently, activists who might be interested in engaging in behavior that challenges the status quo –threatening its reputation or finances– are not just at risk of being punished. Because of Brown's surveillance capacity, they are almost certainly going to be caught and made to answer for their "criminal" behavior. The near certainty of being caught or found in association with "criminal" behaviour undoubtedly shapes a student's decision to participate in radical or disruptive actions on campus. Thus, the Brownopticon constantly encourages students to behave in ways that maintain the status quo. What is more, because a "criminal" action being observed could result in increased scrutiny and the likelihood of other "criminal" actions being observed (even those that are not of a political nature), students with "bad records" are even more likely to stick to the status quo and forego participating in radical actions. For these reasons, the Brownopticon is likely to engender a politics of respectability among its subjects, as

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<sup>83</sup> "Jeremy Bentham And The Panopticon Prison," Criminology Web.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*

it creates a divide between “disrespectable” students who are engaged in student activism that challenges the status quo and “respectable” students who approach activism in the ways that the university deems appropriate, manageable, and good for the brand.

## Hacktivism

Given the deleterious impact that panoptic culture can have on student activism, it’s imperative that student activists cultivate a set of counter-surveillance or “hacktivist” practices. The following is a meditation on possible counter-surveillance practices that can be used to cultivate private information spaces within the Brownopticon.

Educational Records - first, FERPA mandates that students are able to inspect their own educational records, and while this might not include all records in a student’s file, it’s worth knowing what those records entail and what information is most sensitive.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, FERPA requires that students are allowed to block the disclosure of directory information. Block your information!<sup>87</sup>

The Brown ID Card - while the Brown ID card makes it possible to log a range of student activity, the technology that facilitates that collection is not particularly sophisticated. The Brown ID Card system takes advantage of magstripe technology, which makes cards relatively easy to copy — a decent magstripe reader/writer machine costs about \$50 on Amazon. Therefore, the easiest way to avoid having one’s behavior logged is to duplicate the card of another person (especially someone who’s less likely to be monitored) in the card system (ideally with their consent), and then use their card instead of your own.

Video Cameras - wearing clothing that covers a good amount of your face and body is an easy fix, but if you’re worried about facial recognition technology being run on any of the footage the CCTV system collects, you can also use lasers to disrupt the facial recognition software or try some of the fashions created by CV Dazzle.<sup>88</sup>

Smartphone Location Tracking - removing, changing, or withholding your cell phone number from the BrownAlert system (or any other record-keeping entity that requests it) are easy ways to make the tracking of your smartphone more difficult.

Email and File Storage - the use of non-brown emails is a good start, especially privacy-conscious email platforms like ProtonMail or Riseup. In addition to email platforms, PRISM-Break has a list of applications for computers and phones that are excellent ways to augment an individual’s privacy and security. Some of these applications and/or services include DuckDuckGo (search engine), Brave (web

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<sup>86</sup> Brown University, “Brown University FERPA Policy.”

<sup>87</sup> Brown University, “Brown University FERPA Policy.”

<sup>88</sup>“CV Dazzle: Camouflage from face detection,” CV Dazzle.

browser), Cryptomator (client-side encryption for cloud storage), Signal (instant messaging), and more.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

While this investigation of Brown's surveillance capacity is certainly not exhaustive, it has demonstrated the extent to which Brown is able to amass data on students who are dependent on the services it provides and the impact that this amassing of data can have on campus activism. Further and perhaps most importantly, this paper demonstrates the necessity of counter-surveillance practices in order to generate private information spaces inside of the Brownopticon and limit its effect on campus organizing. And while I'm sure folks will have to weigh the logistical difficulty of hacktivist practices against the sensitivity of their communications and information, I sincerely hope a whistleblower comes along and whips everyone into shape!

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<sup>89</sup> "Opt out of global data surveillance programs like PRISM, XKeyscore and Tempora." PRISM-Break.

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## Cyber & Self-Defense 4 Hacker Femmes & Radical Anarchist Theydies

**PLEASE READ:** The purpose of this document is to peak folks' interest in cyber/self defense and encourage further study. This document is a compilation of resources and guides written by authors linked throughout the document. As compilers, we do not have the necessary expertise to evaluate the safety or effectiveness of the resources below. In fact, some of the resources below may provide conflicting information. Therefore, we do not recommend the use of any of the information that follows without further study and formal instruction. Furthermore, we do not condone the use of violence and are not responsible for harm caused by folks who misuse the information in this guide.

### *Defensive Security*

Privacy Conscious Software	<p>Most commonly used applications and web platforms have weak or non-existent privacy protections and – in many cases – are actively collecting data about your behaviour that is then sold for malicious, capitalist purposes.</p> <p><a href="#">PRISM BREAK</a> is a resource that lists privacy conscious alternatives to mainstream software and additional precautions that should be taken to ensure one's privacy (i.e. VPNs, alternative DNS servers, etc.). Check out <b>TOR (browsing)</b>, <b>Signal (messaging)</b>, <b>ProtonMail (email)</b>, <b>Jitsi (video conferencing)</b>, and more!</p> <p>It's also important to <b>install an anti-malware software</b> that is not invading your privacy. Learn more about how to choose an anti-malware software at <a href="#">Restore Privacy</a>.</p>
Password Manager	<p>Password breaches have become a common 21st century phenomenon. Some examples of breaches that might have impacted Brown students and their email accounts are the Canva data</p>

	<p>breach in May of 2019 or the Chegg data breach of April 2018. If all of the passwords to your accounts are similar, one breach could mean that an intruder has access to all of your online accounts. Using varied and complex passwords is one of the best ways to ensure that you are protected!</p> <p>PRISM BREAK recommends <a href="#">KeePassXC</a> for managing passwords.</p> <p>You should also <b>enable two-factor authentication</b> whenever possible!</p>
Mesh Network Technology	<p>A mesh network is a series of nodes (e.g. phones, computers, etc.) that connect with one another and co-operate to route data to and from one node in the network to another. This type of network can be used to send encrypted information that is not visible to intermediary nodes. Mesh networks can effectively replace the need for internet – using bluetooth to form the network – and circumvent state/corporate surveillance and control. This is ideal for situations like a protest where folks are relatively close to one another.</p> <p><b>Bridgefy</b> is a messaging app (available on iOS and Android) that creates a mesh network of phones connected to one another via bluetooth and has been used by protesters in Hong Kong.</p> <p>@code_savy_folks, it's also a <a href="#">developer-friendly SDK</a> that can be integrated into other mobile applications!</p>
Metadata	<p>Metadata (or "data about data") is data that describes a piece of information, apart from the information itself. Metadata often accompanies emails, images, PDF files, etc. and can include anything from location information to temporal information to a person's IP addresses.</p>

	<p>Here are some resources that describe the information that can be ascertained through metadata and tips/guides for scrubbing (or removing) metadata:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metadata in emails: <a href="#">What Can You Learn From An Email Header (Metadata)? by Guy McDowell</a></li> <li>• Removing metadata from PDFs: <a href="#">PDF properties and metadata by Adobe</a></li> <li>• Removing metadata from images: <a href="#">ImageOptim</a> (Mac only) or <a href="#">Free Scrub</a> by Miserlou on GitHub</li> <li>• <b>Disable location services</b> to prevent location metadata from being added to photos, messages, and other pieces of information.</li> </ul>
Data Breaches and Brokers	<p>Your data is valuable and powerful. It is bought and sold by companies that are interested in instrumenting your behaviour. It's important that you are aware of the data that corporations have access to and how you can limit their access to it.</p> <p>Use <a href="#">Have I Been Pwned</a> to check if your information has been leaked in a data breach.</p> <p><a href="#">Here</a> is a list of data brokers and opt-out guides compiled by Yael Grauer.</p>
Facial Recognition	<p>Facial recognition software may be used non-consensually to identify and surveil individuals in a variety of circumstances.</p> <p><a href="#">CV Dazzle</a> is a project by Adam Harvey that aims to confuse facial recognition software with things like makeup and hairstyling techniques.</p>

Anonymous Browsing	<p>Anonymity can be an important part of doing political work online. To anonymize your internet traffic you can do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on a public wifi network (like at a coffee shop) and spoof your MAC (media access control) address so that your device's actual MAC address is not recorded by the owners of the wifi network. <a href="#">Here's</a> a script for spoofing your MAC address.</li> <li>• Install a VPN (virtual private network) so that internet service providers are unable to determine what sites you are visiting. Be sure to select a VPN that is <a href="#">privacy-conscious</a>.</li> <li>• Use the TOR (the onion router) network so that all of the sites that you are visiting are being visited anonymously (i.e. without revealing your IP address to the sites you're visiting). Download the TOR Browser <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
Location Tracking	<p>Applications often log your location data and can either sell it or use it to instrument your behaviour. This data might also be used to surveil specific targets or traffic at locations of interest (e.g. protest sites). While disconnecting from wireless services, disabling location services, and turning off your phone can offer some protection, <b>do not assume any of these tactics will protect you completely</b> from location tracking (for an example of this read <a href="#">here</a>).</p> <p>An alternative to the methods above is location spoofing, which refers to the successful falsification of one's location).</p> <p><a href="#">Skylift</a> is geolocation spoofing technology</p>

	<p>used in the <a href="#">Data Pools</a> project. The hardware necessary to use Skylift costs less than \$10.</p> <p>There are a variety of inexpensive GPS spoofing applications and VPN/DNS services available, but they're effectiveness isn't always clear. Alternatively, a relatively technical guide (in the form of a blog post by Stefan Kiese) for GPS spoofing is available <a href="#">here</a>. It was originally intended to help Pokemon Go users spoof their location to catch 'em all. The <a href="#">HackerRF</a> hardware required for this spoofing costs about \$300.</p>
Security Guides	<p>The following is a list of additional security guides and resource compilations that are worth exploring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Surveillance Self-Defence</a> - guides for a variety of scenarios and security goals. Check out their protest guide!</li> <li>• <a href="#">Security In-A-Box</a> - more guides and toolkits! Check out their anti-malware guide.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-doxing Guide</a> - as the name suggests, an anti-doxing guide for activists.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Riseup.net</a> - a compilation of additional resources, guides, and toolkits. They also offer email, VPN, and collaboration services.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Cyberwomen</a> - a digital security curriculum and with relevant materials.</li> <li>• <a href="#">ACLU Stingray Tracking Devices Map</a> - A map of the US that shows which states have law enforcement departments known to use</li> </ul>

	Stingrays (devices that mimic cell phone towers and trick cell phones within their vicinity to send identifying information).
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\*\*\* A note on panoptic culture: the panopticon is an institutional design wherein all of the individuals existing within the institution are able to be observed by a single security guard, without the individuals being able to know whether they are being watched. Panopticism effectively induces self-censorship, self-regulation because all of the individuals within the institution might be observed at any moment. Therefore, part of the importance of normalizing privacy practices in our organizing is because they help to mitigate the effects (both conscious and unconscious) of panoptic culture on our organizing (e.g. the rising tendency of folks to engage in respectable, allowed, or “legal” tactics).

\*\*\* A note on other practices: generally, keep privacy/facial recognition/location settings high on your online profiles and make sure to update everything (apps, operating systems, etc.) often, as updates often address security concerns. Update your privacy settings on all of your social media accounts and/or other relevant online services. Also, using faraday bags and RFID pouches can create an additional level of security for your phones, credit cards, etc.

### *Offensive Security*

Courses in Hacking	<p>Taking advantage (or knowing how to take advantage) of vulnerabilities in a system or a piece of software can be a valuable asset to your organizing. The following is a list of courses available on YouTube for folks interested in learning how to hack!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Full Ethical Hacking Course - Network Penetration Testing for Beginners</a> by the Cyber Mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete with a GitHub repository containing a course overview and homework assignments.</li> <li>○ No captions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15 hours.</li> <li>● <a href="#">Ethical Hacking Full Course</a> by Edureka <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Captions available in English, Hindi, German, Urdu, and Telugu.</li> <li>○ 10 hours.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">The Complete Ethical Hacking Course for 2020!</a> By Joseph Delgadillo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No Captions</li> <li>○ 8 hours.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>You might also want to consider other beginner programming courses and/or courses related to computer systems.</p>
Kali Linux	<p>Kali Linux is essentially an operating system (like Mac, Windows, or Linux) that is specifically designed for ethical hacking and penetration testing. As such it comes pre-loaded with a huge set of tools, including things like the Social Engineering Toolkit, the Metasploit Framework, John the Ripper, etc.</p> <p>One of the benefits of Kali Linux is that instead of installing it onto your computer, you can install the operating system on a USB drive and boot (in other words, start) the operating system from said device (instead of installing it permanently on your own computer). <a href="#">Here</a> is a guide for making a bootable Kali Linux USB (it's most fun if you follow the "persistent" instructions).</p>
Audio Surveillance	<p>With regard to recording, Rhode Island is a one-party consent state (<a href="#">R.I. Gen Laws § 11-35-21(c)(3)</a>). This means that a person is allowed to record a conversation if (1) they are a contributor or (2) they have the <i>prior</i> permission of at least one other contributor.</p>

	<p>This has pros and cons. On one hand, this means that folks can be recorded without their own consent. On the other hand, <b>this means that students have the ability to record conversations with administrators in order to keep them accountable, evidence criminal activity, or document abuse.</b> It's important to keep in mind that while this type of recording is legal in the state of Rhode Island, Brown's Code of Student Conduct Section D.12 states: "Intrusion into the personal life of another, in ways that are reasonably likely to cause injury or distress, in places where one would have a reasonable expectation of privacy ... Examples of this conduct include, but are not limited to, making, viewing, listening to, or distributing secret recordings..."</p>
Magstripe Technology	<p>The Brown ID Card system uses magstripe technology. That is to say, Brown ID cards have a band of magnetic material that stores a unique series of alphanumeric characters. This string of characters is read by a magstripe reader and used to determine whether you have access to a building or permission for a free bus ride.</p> <p>That said, magstripe cards are technically easy to copy (as it only requires that you read the string of characters from one card and write the same string to another), and can be used to expand access afforded to Brown students (i.e. buildings and buses). A <a href="#">reader/writer machine</a> costs about \$80, but blank cards cost less than 10 cents at <a href="#">Plastek Cards</a>.</p>
GitHub	<p>A platform that hosts the source code for a ton of programs written by a ton of people. GitHub can be particularly helpful</p>



	<p>if you're looking for scripts (pieces of code) that do specific jobs.</p> <p>For example, a GitHub user, Greenwolf, created a program called <a href="#">Social Mapper</a> that uses facial recognition software to find the social media profiles of a set of input names and faces. It's typical of programs on GitHub to come with instructions as well (these can sometimes be pretty technical, so just ask a CS pal). Imagine how you might be able to use a program like Social Mapper to collect information about university administrators and/or corporation members. The possibilities on GitHub are endless! If you're feeling up to it, give Social Mapper a try, or search for other programs/scripts.</p>
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\*\*\* Note on hacking: while hacking is often associated with malice and criminality, hacking is largely about clever and elegant solutions to challenging problems. Hacking culture emerged in the 50s and 60s at MIT, and with it came a moral philosophy that continues to inspire the hackers of today. In the second chapter of *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution* by Steven Levy, Levy defines the Hacker Ethic:

- Access to computers—and anything that might teach you something about the way the world works—should be unlimited and total. Always yield to the Hands-On Imperative!
- All information should be free.
- Mistrust Authority—Promote Decentralization.
- Hackers should be judged by their hacking, not bogus criteria such as degrees, age, race, or position.
- You can create art and beauty on a computer.
- Computers can change your life for the better.

**techie vibes  $\neq$  hacker vibes.**

*Violence & Weapons & Combat*

Writing On Violence	<p>The following is a list of readings about the utility, efficacy, and morality of violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">On Violence</a> by Frantz Fanon (the first chapter of his book titled <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Red Summer</a> by Rebecca Onion</li> <li>• <a href="#">Violence, Peace, and Peace Research</a> by Johan Galtung</li> <li>• <a href="#">A Black Radical Defense of the Second Amendment</a> by Patrick D. Anderson</li> <li>• Strategy, (Non)Violence, and Everyday Anti-Fascism by Mark Bray (the sixth chapter of his book titled the <a href="#">ANTIFA: The Anti-Fascist Handbook</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense</a> by Adrian Wood &amp; Nutan Rajguru</li> <li>• <a href="#">Just War: The Just War Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare</a> by Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan</li> <li>• <a href="#">Nick Hewlett: Marx on Violence</a> by Cihan Aksan</li> </ul>
The Anarchist Cookbook	<p>The Anarchist Cookbook is a guide (written by William Powell) for using and manufacturing drugs, phreaking devices, firearms, and explosives. It also contains a list of household substitutes for ingredients needed to make the aforementioned tools. Find a copy of <i>The Anarchist Cookbook</i> <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The following is a sample list of entries in the cookbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Molotov Cocktail</li> <li>• How to make TNT</li> <li>• LSD</li> <li>• Converting a shotgun into a grenade launcher</li> <li>• Bridge destruction</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic scramblers</li> </ul>
Protest Supplies & Everyday Carry Kits	<p>The following is a list of protest resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Medic Wiki</a> - for treating a range of injuries.</li> <li>• <a href="#">An Activist's Guide to Basic First Aid</a> a zine by Black Cross Healthcare Collective - another guide to for first aid and responding to protest injuries and maladies.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Radical Cheerbook</a> zine by Sprout Anarchist Collective - lots of fun and powerful cheers.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Direct Action Survival Guide</a> zine - things to consider when engaging in direct action.</li> <li>• <a href="#">How to gear up for a protest</a> by Gerry Mak - things to wear and have with you at a protest.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Pepperspray, CS, &amp; Other "Less Lethal Weapons"</a> zine by the Automedical Collective - a sciency medical guide for injuries inflicted by "less lethal" police weapons.</li> </ul> <p>Make sure you know the protest location/route and alternative exits if things get out of hand. Additionally, make sure you're aware of relevant laws where you're engaging in protest. Discuss the possibility of arrest with your friends and find some tips about arrest <a href="#">here</a> (at Mic.com).</p> <p>Consider making an Everyday Carry (EDC) Kit. Very simply, EDC kits contain useful items, especially those that prepare someone for potentially dangerous or unexpected situations. They can also come in handy at protests! Common EDC items include knives, flashlights, watches, first aid supplies,</p>

	<p>cash, pen and paper, etc.</p> <p>Some additional things you might want to consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narcan kits</li> <li>• Seat belt cutter and glass breaker</li> <li>• Self defense flashlight</li> <li>• Pepper spray and/or a taser</li> <li>• Charging blocks</li> <li>• Prescription medications</li> <li>• Tampons and pads</li> <li>• Lasers</li> <li>• Photocopies of ID (with caution and if necessary)</li> <li>• Emergency contacts (consider writing phone numbers on your body)</li> </ul>
Know Your Rights	<p>Make sure you know what is legally within your rights, and prepare for navigating the consequences if you need to do something illegal and/or outside of the rights. The Rhode Island ACLU has created Know Your Rights pamphlets for the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">What to Do if You're Stopped by Police Immigration or the FBI</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Protests and Demonstrations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Photography in Public by the ACLU</a></li> </ul>
Martial Arts and Self-Defense Classes	<p>As many of us know that weapons are frequently the cause of escalation. Knowing how to engage in hand-to-hand combat can be an effective way to protect oneself from violence without escalating a conflict. <a href="#">Here</a> (at dojos.info) you can find a list of martial arts schools, clubs, and studios in Rhode Island. This is especially fun if you get a group of gays, gals, or non-binary pals!</p>
Guns	<p>Shooting is a valuable and empowering skill, but it tends to be the case that gun ownership is less common among women</p>

and folks of color. If you're interested in learning how to use a gun, [here](#) is a list of shooting ranges (from the RI Department of Environmental Management), some of which offer classes on gun use.

Some things to note about gun laws in the state of Rhode Island:

- **Open Carry** is only permitted in RI with a License to Carry Concealed Weapons (LCCW) issued by the Attorney General.
- **Concealed Carry** is permitted in RI with an LCCW issued by local licensing authorities or the attorney general.
- A safety card (or a **blue card**) is obtained through a series of tests and courses adjudicated by the RI Department of Environmental Management.
- In order to **purchase a gun** in RI, a person must either have an LCCW; have a blue card; be an active or retired law enforcement or correctional officer; or be an active duty military member.
- RI is a hybrid **shall-issue/may-issue** state meaning that local licensing authorities must issue an LCCW if a person meets the necessary criteria, but the Attorney General may refuse to issue an LCCW.
- RI also has a **Castle Doctrine** that allows folks to use deadly force inside of their home with no duty to retreat (if they reasonably believe someone is about to inflict great bodily harm upon them).

For more information check out the following resources for RI gun laws:

- [Rhode Island: Concealed Carry](#)

	<p><a href="#">Reciprocity Map &amp; Gun Laws</a> by USCCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Gun laws in Rhode Island</a> by Wikipedia</li></ul> <p>The <a href="#">Well Armed Woman</a> is a company that is dedicated to encouraging gun ownership among women. They're pretty deeply connected to the NRA, but they do have some unique products and resources that are worth checking out.</p>
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\*\*\* A note on guns: the ownership and use of guns is often associated with white, rural conservatism. This can make entering “gun spaces” (i.e. ranges, classes, clubs, etc.) difficult or uncomfortable for marginalized folks. Participating in these spaces is much easier with a group of friends!

“My crime is that of outsmarting you.”  
+++The Mentor+++



## **Where Have We Been? Where Can We Go?**

Questions of Sustainability and Care in Social Movements

By Sara Alavi

*If you could ask any question of a student organizer that came before you, what would you ask? This piece was born out of the questions I took the time to ask my elder peers, and the wise and wonderful reflections they shared in return.*

I should start out by saying that I'm not writing this because I have any answers. The real reason I'm writing this is because I'm confused. Throughout the two years I've spent at Brown supposedly learning all-important things and changing the world while simultaneously being fantastically cool and amassing an adoring Twitter following for all my scalding hot takes (spoiler alert: none of that happened), I've become steadily *more* confused. Confusion doesn't have to be a bad thing, though. Confusion is what makes the space for us to ask questions and grow, whether or not those questions have answers. The question I'm focusing on here has been hitting harder and harder the more involved I become with social justice work at Brown: How can liberatory movement-building bring us joy and energy instead of burnout and harm?

It may seem oxymoronic for work that moves towards liberation to actually often be harmful and overwhelming, but my experience at Brown has already shown me just how common those feelings are. If you think about it, it actually makes a lot of sense. More often than not, we become involved in social justice work because we feel personally connected to the liberatory end goal. When our communities are under attack, we want to work to protect them. These are our lives, our families, our friends who are being impacted. Our core values are being violated in the name of violence, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism, and general assholery. That means that when we enter organizing spaces, we are bringing our trauma and our difficult histories. We are bringing our whole, vulnerable selves and our biggest fears and our dreams for a better future. Just carrying all of that takes a massive amount of work. Now try carrying it all in conjunction with everything the folks in your circles carry. Now try talking about it. Now try organizing around it. Now try dealing with every obstacle the University throws at you to make your movement fail. Now try doing all of that while attempting to pass your classes, working a job, and maybe even taking care of yourself (a revolutionary thought!) If any of that sounds easy to you, congratulations! You are stronger than I'll ever be and are probably secretly a superhero.

If all of that is true, is there any way that we can find joy and energy in fighting for liberation and organizing for change? Whether an answer to that question even exists depends entirely on who you ask and when you ask it. When I first asked myself that question, I was surprised that I had never thought to ask it before. The abstract



concepts of burnout and healing existed in my consciousness, but never so closely tied to movement building and the personal experiences of the people I care about. One of the many issues with university organizing and the four-year turnover that erases any semblance of stability is that oftentimes by the time we think to ask these questions, the older leaders we want to ask have already graduated and moved on with their lives. Even more often, the questions don't occur to us until we have felt the harmful effects of burnout for ourselves, leaving us stranded in our experiences without a clear understanding of how we got there and how we can move forward.

As a Brown student, especially as somebody who engages in activism (whatever that means), you will see firsthand the extent to which Brown's love of flaunting their progressiveness and appreciation for student activism is just a façade. It's tiring as heck. This piece is to reassure you that you are not alone in feeling tired, and to encourage you to enter the alternate-universe of this University armed with the questions and attitudes that just might carry you through. Since I don't have the answers, I am here to give you the next best thing: wisdom and reflections from people who aren't me. They took the time to share their three or four years of experience with my deeply confused self, and for that I am eternally grateful. If you're feeling confused/tired/overwhelmed/ hurt or anticipate that some time on this four-ish year road you will end up feeling confused/tired/ overwhelmed/hurt, stick with me. We are all on this wild ride together, but learning from our elder peers is one of the surest ways to keep ourselves from getting thrown off the wagon. Maybe we can even build a safer wagon altogether.

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## **BURNOUT**

### *Reflections, Causes, and Experiences*

A lot of burnout culture at Brown happens because of the four-year turnover. There's no keeping of knowledge. Every time something like this comes up we're re-inventing the wheel because people who have been having this conversation have tapped out or are gone so they're not in conversation with current students. It's hard because relationships and work can be very individualized, so one person has the connection or the knowledge and when they're gone you have no choice but to start all over again. That elevates certain people in a way that's dangerous and takes away from the work that everyone could be doing. When I think about the Black Student Walkout, I think that if people had access to things from past classes and resources, it would have made the work a lot less taxing. It's reaffirming and takes the burden off you because you have a back end to what you're saying that makes you feel legit.

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Burnout leads to a loss of community and an inability to create community. We also need to think about how we define community, because your definition of community can be very harmful and exclusive. There are communities you know you just cannot exist in here. I've been super socially burnt out by the last couple of years because of the idea of disposability in my communities. There's a lot of people involved in social activism for social capital, and it's tiring to be in a space that continuously perpetuates that narrative. That is connected to the conversation about community because when people feel burnt out, they feel that their actions that hurt others are justified. How do we create spaces and resources in community that allow people to heal from their burnout? I don't think Brown has the resources right now to do that. People end up self-isolating as a mechanism to deal with it, because we aren't able to do it in community with each other.

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I see a cause of burnout being the conflict happening between students that are often working towards the same goal or are in the same spaces and organizing with progressive orientation. People are put in the position of having to self-preserve by leaving the space and opportunities to do work that is important to them so they can heal. It comes down to how labor gets distributed for particular people. There's tons of invisible labor that happens in organizing spaces and circles. Unless you're really careful, that labor goes unacknowledged, and there's not enough recognition that people are people and have other things going on. A lot of people also feel the need to do a lot of things because they feel like the work won't get done if they don't do it. It often comes as a part of being a member of a marginalized group—there's that feeling of 'if I don't do the work for my marginalized group, it's not going to happen, and our experience won't improve.' So, we feel the burden of doing a lot of things all the time, and then we burn out. People can be really intentional about how to preserve *other* people's health, but it's often at the expense of their own. We need to learn to take care of ourselves too.

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Avoiding burnout to me comes down to setting solid boundaries. A lot of people in organizing spaces don't know their boundaries and the differences between wants and needs. It makes a lot of sense that these people can't verbalize boundaries even to themselves because a lot of the times they're from marginalized identities and they've always had their boundaries disrespected. Parenting in the US is really guilty of that, like kids are forced to give hugs to strangers and be kind to people they don't know. Through a more critical lens, you can think about whose boundaries are most often disrespected, like black women. So many people have gone through experiences like that so they have a difficult time thinking about their boundaries.

My advice to incoming students is to separate themselves from grind culture—the culture of going and going and hoping that things will be addressed on their own. You have to address things or they will address you. It's especially hard because at Brown it doesn't feel like you have the time or capacity for that. We are encouraged not to sleep or to deprive ourselves of what we need to get shit done. Be proactive about it! College is a unique experience where you live where you work and go to school, so there's no boundary between them. You need to give yourself a lot of time to pause and get ready to address surprises, and to prioritize yourself when you have to choose.

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I'm a great example of burnout happening. I wouldn't call myself a student organizer or an activist. I was the kind of person that came to Brown and took on a lot of stuff because I care about social justice and there are lots of things I can do. As I got busier and depressed, I started feeling guilty about not being able to do everything I committed to, but I also felt guilty after dropping those things to take care of myself. I've also noticed how guilt manifests itself in organizing spaces. In my first two years, I did a lot of stuff with the Asian American student organizations and tried to make changes, but I would blame myself for things not working and then got tired of it.

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I think burnout happens when people aren't able to prioritize themselves like they need, and have not yet identified how to engage in self-care. I see it happening in activist spaces when it's the same people always doing the work. I was the coordinator for a program I cared about a lot, but I couldn't continue being in that role this year. What made it difficult was that I was actually a very strong coordinator and I would pull my own weight while other people didn't. I saw that a lot of work tended to be placed on women of color, especially black women. It was complicated because I gave so much to the program and I genuinely loved it deeply. Being part of it was a labor of love. To be working in a capacity where other people aren't putting in the same energy can be frustrating and it burned me out because I kept thinking, 'If I don't do it, who will?'

## HARM AND HEALING

*How can we address mistakes and actions that cause harm in our communities?*

I think of this in the **BIG** Framework: How am I communicating my **boundaries** to others, and maintaining **integrity** in a way that allows me to make **generous assumptions** about other people? It's easy to keep score with people who are making mistakes. That's not entirely wrong if you're trying to address patterns, but if those mistakes have already been addressed you are just contributing to the idea that every mistake diminishes someone's purity as an activist or person. The idea of diminishing purity goes against the idea of liberation. In moments when it feels like we're not

meeting our own needs, it feels hard to make generous assumptions about other people. When somebody says something that feels oppressive, we jump to the idea that they're trying to harm us because we are acting on the assumption that everyone is for themselves. We don't always recognize that we're assuming the worst because our own needs still aren't being met. If we invest in ourselves, we can be curious and compassionate about *why* people are doing certain things instead of making assumptions. That will allow us to have open conversations about mistakes that center our relationships.

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For me, community healing is an anomaly. As of now, I'm not particularly interested or comfortable with community healing. As much as I appreciate healing with other people, I need to have time with myself to reflect and not be expected to take on someone else's emotional labor that automatically gets placed on you in the process of community healing. There was a lot of conflict during my sophomore year and a lot of attempts at community healing but I think everybody needs to heal individually first before we can be strong for other people. Individual healing for me looks a lot like thinking aloud and writing my thoughts because being able to see my thoughts and self-speak allows me to process.

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At the basis, I think it's all about fostering a sense of community. The word community gets thrown around a lot, but people aren't willing to do the work it takes to create it. If everything you do is rooted in community, it makes it easier to turn to people and tell them what they did and how it affected people. That empowers people who have been harmed to be able to speak about it because they *want* to make things better. People need to feel supported and connected from the very beginning. That starts with working to build relationships with people, which is the only way to create sustainability in a community or movement. When I think of where issues emerged from the black student walkout, I think it's from the fact that it was operating on the premise of a community which doesn't exist, allowing harm to take place on both sides. It's difficult because we're seeing what organizers did to try and create some real change for a community that they loved and then on the flip side we're seeing people's responses to that and feeling that they were harmed and left out of the process. We can move forward by building relationships with people we're organizing on behalf of, and with those who are willing to take on the work to improve our experiences here. In doing that work, we can look back and celebrate the moment as one where we looked in the mirror and asked what we want our community to look like. If this is a community you want, you have to think, 'I don't necessarily like the way they did it, how do I want to see improvement in this community? How can I support?'

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Attitudes about making mistakes here have a lot to do with performativity and how we fear what people think about us. A lot of the time the terms “organizing” and “activism” are used as performative words people feel they can just throw around to look good because of how many posts they’ve made, things they’ve done, events they’ve gone to, or clubs they are a part of. How do you educate and hold people accountable without playing into a performative narrative? A lot of times people just tell you to do better but don’t know how you should do better. They’re just saying you should. I want to emphasize that organizing and community building are not linear. Brown makes it seem linear, especially when you’re being confronted by so many obstacles. All these performative things make it seem like growth is linear, but growth doesn’t always have to equate to progress.

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Working through harm together is possible, but it’s difficult because of this weird time we’re in where call-out culture and cancelling are really “in” for a variety of reasons. That makes it difficult when you make a mistake in organizing spaces because people hold organizers and people with certain politics to a high standard. How people are held accountable when they make mistakes is often really toxic. One of the best ways to avoid being toxic is building friendships with the people you’re working with. If you’re not friends with people, it’s easy to want to get rid of them when they cause harm. When you’re friends, there’s a desire to build and grow together by addressing harm in the community you’ve built.

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I’ve never been in a situation where there’s been harm and a whole process, but I’ve been thinking a lot about how you perform guilt versus accountability. How do you hold yourself accountable without making it something other people have to validate? I think you have to be forgiving to yourself. Like, I am for all these things, but I can’t show up to everything. I have to figure out where I can show up, when I’m present I can be very present and let people know I appreciate what they’re doing.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

*What does it mean? What can it look like?*

I hate that word! Nobody really knows what it means. It’s like ‘problematic,’ ‘pushback,’ and ‘discourse.’ I just hate those. Accountability for me just means saying ‘I’m sorry, I’ll change my behavior and here’s how.’ The ‘here’s how’ doesn’t need to be said explicitly because it should manifest in the form of action. Saying ‘thank you for holding me accountable’ is not an apology, it’s just a way to recognize you were harmful without actually doing or changing anything. So, I think accountability culture and the word accountability are just ways for people to appear like they’re making a change when

they're really not. I also don't like public callouts as a form of accountability because they can be really performative and just cause more harm to everyone. I spent so much time being fearful of doing something wrong and being dragged, which is hard to live with when it applies to every little thing you do. Individual conversations are powerful, and confrontation doesn't have to be a bad thing when it means having conversations and working towards a goal with somebody to remedy a situation in an actual concrete way.

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Accountability looks different for everyone, so people need to be honest about what they mean by it. They need to honestly consider what they want and distinguish between punishment and accountability. It's not necessarily bad to say you want someone to be punished, but that's no transformative—they're distinctive things. In accountability processes we see there is a difference between punishment and consequences. Actions have consequences, but we don't have to create our own brand of harm as a form of consequence. It's not punishment to ask somebody who has caused harm to step down from their role, especially if that person is seen as an embodiment of a movement or goal. I also think it's important to remember that accountability processes aren't inherently healing processes. You need to have both.

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Jessica: Accountability and guilt are very tied together, and often when you feel really guilty it's more useful to ask yourself how you can demonstrate accountability in your actions. That can look like thinking about ways to reach out to people, redistribute resources, and support in invisible ways. It's important to be able to acknowledge when certain forms of accountability aren't plausible, and to notice other avenues for going out and *doing* something helpful.

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Accountability can be so performative. How can you be accountable when you cause harm without overcompensating for your mistake, which makes it seem not genuine? We've internalized this narrative about accountability, community building, and healing that is perpetuated by people who have the economic, physical, and mental capacity to write academic pieces about them and implement them into charter schools run by predominantly white boards and other institutions claiming liberalism and a social justice lens perpetuated by white people. We need to name the fact that accountability and community building were born out of communities of color. We need to revert back to those origins by divesting from how we've learned and taught about these ideas. I came to Brown thinking about community in a way that was taught to me by people who were just performing. I internalized it as something that was simple with all these beautiful terms people throw around. The necessary work that goes into healing needs to be

centered. It's something that people of marginalized communities were never meant to access.

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It's not going to look the same across the board. It's all relationship work. Ultimately, I am always mindful of the relationships I have and other people have in order to do work around accountability. Calling someone out in a public setting doesn't do the work to undo the harm someone did. But, I think that if somebody feels that they want to call out someone in a public setting, it can be validating. It takes a lot of energy to muster up the ability to say out loud, 'you said something or did something that is really hurtful.' It's the group's responsibility to think about how to critically engage with the call out in a way that is meaningful and changes the heart of the problem.

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Noelle: In spaces where we like everyone is well-intentioned and trusts each other, accountability can look really chill. Somebody says something chill and then we talk about it in recognition of our relationships to certain people. If person 'X' says something weird and inappropriate or harmful and you don't have the best relationship with that person, someone with a better relationship with them can help educate, learn, grow, and move forward with them. When those conversations are difficult, it's best to identify the best person with the capacity to talk to people about the harm through meaningful engagement.

## CHANGE

*What changes would you like to see to the culture of organizing and community building at Brown?*

I wish people were less overextended. Being tired and overextended doesn't serve anyone. Sometimes people realize that burnout is coming and have this urgency to get everything done now, which just makes things worse. I want people to slow down and concentrate on handing the baton. So much work goes into replicating things because of bad or incomplete transfers of information, so a lot gets lost because of the four-year cut-offs. If we got really good at sharing work and information across grade levels, it would take a lot of the urgency away and stress people out less because there would be trust that people will carry on the work they are doing.

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My mind goes to the classrooms when you're young and first entering academic spaces in elementary, middle, and high school. Disposability culture is normalized from a very young age, when you make a mistake and are held in at recess or in a bigger way with the school to prison pipeline. You come to Brown after 12 years of internalizing disposability, but it's jarring, isolating, and confusing to wait until you're 18/19/20 to start

talking about healing. You're stuck doing the labor of healing from the 12 preceding years while trying to prepare for all the healing you'll do in the future. We need to open up honest conversations about healing with younger people and get over the idea that kids aren't ready to talk about it. Kids are the smartest people I've ever met. Your happiness isn't a priority within your classroom—why is that? Let's talk about it. Kids think that's how it's supposed to be, and go through school thinking unhappiness is necessary. By including them in the conversation, we can give young people the agency they deserve and make the process of divesting from the narrative of disposability so much easier when we are grown.

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I want to see people showing up for each other in creative ways that also demonstrate care. If there's an action happening, what if other students got together and cooked organizers food? There's this idea that you have to show up and check all these boxes, which is difficult because students have so many things to manage. It can be hard to muster the energy to show up in a traditional way, but that's not the only way we can be showing care.

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I want to change the language that's used. It's great that I came to Brown and acquired certain words like 'micro-aggressions' to explain what I have experienced before, but I've built up all this language that is very specific to elite institutions. People at home don't use terms like 'accountability.' Why are we using words that can't connect to people outside of the institution? I don't remember what it was like to talk about my experiences without using all these buzzwords. Swap "accountability" out with "I'm sorry." We don't need to use language we can only use in elite social justice-y spaces. We're not going to be at Brown forever, so we're not going to be talking like this forever. I'm thinking about how I'm going to take what I learned at Brown and talk about them in a non-Brown way. There's no point in learning tools to take back to my community if there is going to be such a big language barrier.

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I used to think every single space and community should be political. Being a part of organizing spaces becomes a social life and creates a sense of belonging. In one way, it's nice to be in community with people who have similar values and visions of the world. But I'm wondering, is there a space where people of marginalized communities can just exist together without a political aspect? There's a perception that everyone has to be doing something that is a form of resistance. The more you do, the more popular you are. The work you're recognized as doing determines if you have friends and are respected. That's where I think the connection between activism and social life at Brown is a problem.

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I want to change the idea that it's only "us." There are more ways to integrate the administration, Providence community members, and grad students in this work so there's a network that lives beyond you. You can get a lot of things done by building relationships with people with institutional power. If your work engages more types of people more robustly, it's harder for people like Christina Paxson to write it off as "fringe." It comes down to building those connections and developing them in a way that outlives you and passing them down to the next generation of black students at Brown, POC at Brown, etc. It's also important that we keep emphasizing that everything that students don't have to do all the work. If you're talking about preventing harm, you need to turn to adults who are tasked with that as part of their job.

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So, what have we learned? The diversity in these reflections demonstrates just how unique our approaches to healing, organizing, and self-care can be. There is no one right path or perspective. Without concrete answers, what can we do? Keep these perspectives in mind as you move forward in your journey at Brown and beyond. Take note of the ideas that speak to you and hold them close as you begin to engage in these issues for yourself. Pay close attention to your boundaries and feelings to aid in your development of personal self-care practices. Be proactive. Be compassionate. Be curious. Be kind to yourself and to others. Ask yourself why you engage in the work you engage in, and consider the future you imagine arising from that work. Make meaningful connections with folks of different ages and experiences. Invest in self-discovery. Remember that an elite social justice vocabulary means much less than some people say it does. Prioritize your personal wellbeing, whatever that may look like to you.

Until we take the time to consider the barriers that stand in the way of our individual liberation, the movements we build together will not be sustainable. If you are not sure how to start doing any of these things, don't worry! We are all constantly in the process of introspection and growth, and our first attempts at self-care are not always successful. Sometimes, our second, third, and fourth attempts aren't either. Especially if you, like so many others, have never been confronted with the possibility of centering your needs and building a community that is meaningful to you, this is a major transition. You are not alone in feeling overwhelmed.

Much love,  
Sara

***My endless gratitude goes out to Andy, Jessica, Ly, Nana, Noëlle, and Uche for having these conversations with me and allowing me to share them with you all.***

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

– Paulo Freire

## A Note on Healing

By Ly Dang

To love, to be in community, to hope, to heal--these terms often find themselves in association with radical action. To disorient ourselves from the dominant narratives, from the white winners, and from the institutional and internalized oppressive systems that have been built for the purpose of exclusion and succeeding in praxis, is to love and act radically. We were never meant to love, to be in community, to hope, or to heal. Our existence alone is defying that misinformed reality. The purposes of this note on healing come two-fold: to share my own reconciliations with healing, and for myself to continue to heal as an individual, as well as to interrogate ways in which I can stand with and for my communities. For you as a reader, I welcome you to engage with my reflections and ask yourselves these questions as I write along.

In my reflections, healing has been synonymous with homecoming and home-building. As an aspiring classroom educator, my reconciliations have been mainly grounded in my role within the classroom as an educator, student, and observer. However, I have found that similar to other spaces, the classroom itself is a microcosm of our existence and pursuit of finding community. I continue to find myself on a journey of reconciling the concept of home with the images, feelings, and memories the word itself evokes in me. My definition continues to develop and refine itself as I internalize another year of memories and interactions with the people I meet and the spaces I occupy. I currently see home as a space, though not necessarily physical, that fosters healing, both for myself and for others.

My favorite corner store from childhood sold the best banh cam (sesame ball with mung bean filling) and banh mi thit nguoi (vietnamese baguette with a *decadent* hand-whipped mayonnaise and homemade cold cuts). The low prices to feed my cravings outweighed the long walk from school I took with my sister almost every week. We would find our ways to the storefront and scurry around the small store in hopes of avoiding the crowd of nosy neighbors talking to Bà Hai, the neighborhood Auntie, and the occasional distant relative we would only see at the yearly Tet celebration or extravagant backyard wedding. Regardless of my desire to grab my goodies and escape, I have been a witness to a deep and genuine love and demands for our community to do and be better. This is home for me.

My mother, father, and sister play the roles of the corner store Auntie, the uncle who prepares warm meals in anticipation of school letting out, and the mischievous cousin who would sneakily replace my bag of fruit chews with a packet of wasabi peas. My family is my sanctuary, my sliver of my country now only visible through a pixelated Viber video call or bent photographs arriving in lost-and-found packages, not through the histories reproduced in our academic institutions. This is home for me.

My post-secondary education as a student has been debilitating and invalidating in many forms. While I purposefully choose not to invest much space in this note to share these hurtful moments, I choose to consider more importantly, what has my existence at this institution allowed me to realize what I work to *divest* from and what I choose to *invest* in. In reflection of my educational journey, my tumultuous yet formative moments of schooling often reflect many similar experiences from others who may share aspects of my narrative in predominantly white institutions. Beyond this reality, I reconciled with many “I did nots’.” I did not attend a class in the U.S. with an educator who looked like me, or who was even an educator of color until my first semester of college. I did not have the opportunity to engage in discussions grounded in a commitment to social justice until my first year of college. I did not speak my home language at school until my first year of college. This time of learning and reciprocity alongside my communities, my families, and my students has been a time for me to support myself and others in the processes of self and collective growth. This is home for me.

In each of these moments, actions, and memories, I am working to weave my own personal narrative of home, identity, and belonging.

“Caring for myself is not self indulgence. It is self-preservation,  
and that is an act of political warfare.”

– Audre Lorde

## #BurnBrown

### an abolitionist orientation to the university

*“It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of—this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university.”*

– Fred Moten and Stefano Harney

At the time of writing:

- The spinning of Brown’s corporate web endures.
- Shady and nepotistic admissions practices are abound.
- Staff mistreatment and disposability have reached a boiling point.
- Neocolonial control of Providence persists, and parasitism is custom.
- Defenses of climate destruction and oppressive technology are a constant.
- Demands for reparations remain wholly unfulfilled and insolently dismissed.<sup>90</sup>

Brown is a business, is a corporation, is an enterprise. And it always has been. The university serves to credentialize wealthy, white people – and a selection of poor and colored tokens – so that they can amass and hoard wealth; it strives to ensure that the rich stay educated and the poor stay locked out of high-salaried jobs. This is the essence of its operation. It is not an unforeseen consequence of a poorly executed idea, and it is not a necessary evil in the pursuit of knowledge. It is the purpose of the private university. Brown and the like exist so as to reproduce unjust hierarchies, to monopolize knowledge and information, and to stifle radical organizing in the Providence community and beyond. Very simply, Brown and the like exist to sustain capitalism.<sup>91</sup>

No amount of reform can bring the private university to meet standards of freedom or justice when its essence is corrupt, immoral, and oppressive. If we are invested in ideals of freedom and justice, then we must acknowledge that the abolition of Brown University is a necessary part of liberatory politics. This is not to say that nothing of value takes place at Brown or that we should dispose of everything that lives within its walls. The

<sup>90</sup> [Here](#)’s a cluster of texts related to Brown’s corrupt, immoral, and oppressive conduct.

<sup>91</sup> [Here](#)’s a cluster of texts related to the theory of social reproduction.

words of Soniya Munshi and Craig Willse in the Foreword of *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* are particularly instructive when thinking about how to navigate this tension:

There is nothing we would want to save from the military and the prison when they are destroyed. But there may be much we want to save in the ... university. Our task then is to think about how to nurture these elements to prepare them for their lives outside their current institutional forms.

What follows is a conjecture about how we can (metaphorically) burn away the institutional form and nurture the beauty that lives within.

### **Daddy's Wallet | the budget of the university**

Despite a strong ethical case, the university is not going to stop operating because of the moral epiphany of a few administrators. Like any other business, it will only cease to function when it's no longer profitable – or in the case of a “non-profit” private university, when it's no longer able to support the [six and seven digit salaries of its senior administrators](#) or the financial interests of the Corporation members.<sup>92</sup> With this in mind, our analysis of the university's abolition might be enhanced by considering the financial health of the university and how to manipulate it.

When thinking about the university's financial health, a helpful place to start is with its operational budget. The operational budget lays out the university's revenues and expenses as they are related to the everyday function of the university. Operational expenses include things like employee wages and benefits, financial aid, and general operating expenses (think office supplies, furniture, computers, etc). Operational revenues include things like tuition, donations to the Brown Annual Fund, the endowment payout, etc.<sup>93</sup>

There are two important lessons that can be gleaned from the university's operational budget:

1. According to [the most recent URC Reports](#), staff salaries account for nearly 20% of the university's operational expenses, and this 20% belongs disproportionately

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<sup>92</sup> Is it a coincidence that Brown provides HBO to all of its students when Bernadette Aulestia, president of Global Distribution for HBO, sits on the Corporation? These “coincidences” are not uncommon at Brown, and it's worth asking whether they translate into financial gains for the Corporation members involved.

<sup>93</sup> Operational budgets should not be confused with capital budgets. Capital budgets pertain to larger institutional ventures like new buildings on campus or projects like the Brown Promise.

to its most senior administrators.<sup>94</sup> This fact is the result of a trend that emerged in the US during the 1960s and that is well documented by Benjamin Ginsberg in his book *The Fall of The Faculty: the growth of university administrations*. Ginsberg writes:

Administrative growth may be seen primarily as a result of efforts by administrators to aggrandize their own roles in academic life. Students of bureaucracy have frequently observed that administrators have a strong incentive to maximize the power and prestige of whatever office they hold by working to increase its staff and budget. To justify such increases, they often invent new functions to perform or seek to capture functions currently performed by others.

Put another way, the continued expansion of university administrations has been motivated by the financial and professional interests of their senior administrators, and by extension, these administrators have a huge stake in the financial health of the university because a great deal of its funds support the decoration of their CVs and the furnishing of their pockets.

Now like never before, Brown's governance has come to be dominated by the perverse financial and professional interests of its senior administrators as opposed to the academic and educational interests of the students and faculty. **At Brown, the university's finances dictate the behaviour of the administration.** Consequently, the university's administration will attempt to stifle and undermine any political organizing that it sees as a threat to the university's financial health, and the strength of its response to social movements is likely to be proportional to the damage that those movements could do to the budget. For example, President Paxson's [categorically undemocratic responses to divestment](#) movements are symptomatic of the fact that divestment actually threatens to reduce the endowment payout and shrink the university's operational budget. A similar analysis could be made of her [anti-union remarks](#) in response to the question of graduate student unionization. For the university's senior administrators, it's all about the bottom line and protecting their salaries.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> To put the lopsidedness of the distribution into perspective, the university employs around [3000 staff members](#), and while [it costs roughly \\$200 million to employ all of them](#) (about \$66,000 per person), Christina Paxson “earned” \$1,540,707 in compensation for fiscal year 2017. In that same year, [just 10 of the university's highest paid administrators \(less than 0.01% of the total staff\) “earned” \\$8,722,928](#) in compensation (around 4% of the total staff income).

<sup>95</sup> It's worth noting that many of the university's senior administrators are instruments of the Corporation, and as such, they represent not just their own personal financial interests but those of the Corporation.



2. **Brown is tuition-dependent.** That is, a large portion of the university's revenue – [about 37% in fiscal year 2018](#) – comes from its net tuition fees. This means that the university's financial health is vulnerable to changes in the market price for tuition (which has yet to be a problem, given that tuition has been rising steadily for decades) and the fraction of accepted students that choose to matriculate. The university's finances would be less sensitive to these changes if a larger portion of its revenue came from the endowment payout, which happens to be the case at institutions like Princeton, Yale, and Harvard. That said, given what we know about how the university's finances shape the behaviour of the administration, it becomes clear that the administration is uniquely focused on maximizing the fraction of accepted students that matriculate, growing the endowment, and increasing its payout. This is evidenced by President Paxson making statements like, [“\[the endowment\] must be protected during this time of volatile financial markets.”](#) This also explains why most of BrownDivest's actions and rallies have received negligible administrative retaliation, except their 2019 demonstration during ADOCH, which threatened to bring down the fraction of students that matriculated and, by extension, the university's operational revenues. It's all about the bottom line.

University	<a href="#">Brown</a>	<a href="#">Columbia</a>	<a href="#">Cornell</a>	<a href="#">Dartmouth</a>	<a href="#">Harvard</a>	<a href="#">Princeton</a>	<a href="#">UPenn</a>	<a href="#">Yale</a>
% of Operational Revenue from Endowment Payout in FY18	<b>16%</b>	9%	8%	26%	35%	65%	6%	33%
% of Operational Revenue from Net Tuition and Fees in FY18	<b>37%</b>	24%	17%	25%	22%	5%	10%	10%

Working toward political goals that create budgetary stress will be an important organizing principle for those interested in Brown's abolition, but we'll return to this idea shortly. The tuition dependence of schools like Brown create a unique possibility when thinking about the abolition of private universities more broadly. If the market price for college tuition were to collapse, so would the budget of all tuition-dependent private universities, and this is precisely why the higher education price bubble is the key to the abolition of the private university.

## Blowing Bubbles | the price of an education and why it matters

Time to put your economist hat on! A price bubble occurs when an asset's price significantly exceeds its intrinsic value. When people who own the asset notice that it's not worth as much as everyone thinks it is, they try to sell the asset before other people make the same realization. Eventually, more and more people who have invested in the asset realize it's not worth the price. Widespread knowledge of this discrepancy will trigger a bout of panic selling. Panic selling refers to the sudden, wide-scale sale of an asset, where owners try to sell the asset in an attempt to save some of the money they initially invested before prices fall any further. With everyone selling and nobody buying, the price of the asset collapses. Bubble popped!

You can think about the education that Brown provides to its students as an asset. Students and their families purchase the asset by paying tuition and a range of other fees, but more and more people are asking the question: is the education we're paying for actually worth the cost?

### The Value of a Degree

For the purposes of our analysis, the value of a degree can be broken into three component parts: knowledge value, network value, and employment value. Together these things constitute the total value of a degree.

- **Knowledge Value** represents the knowledge and skills that a person acquires while they are getting their degree. Knowledge however is not something that is easily excludable. Big thanks to the internet, most knowledge that's acquired in a university setting is just as easily acquired online. Skill acquisition is similar. With the exception of hands-on skills that require expensive equipment, things like language and programming skills can easily be developed online. A person might argue that universities are a more credible or reliable source of information than online alternatives, but once again, it is difficult to exclude people from the credible and reliable information that's generated by universities. Resources like edX and CourseHero are accessible to anyone with a computer and an internet connection. Furthermore, the educational benefits associated with bringing students together in the same physical space are, to an increasing extent, being replicated online through social media, online forums, and video conferencing platforms. For these reasons, the knowledge value of a person's degree is

negligible. There's virtually no knowledge or information that a person could get during their time in college that they can't get elsewhere.

- **Network Value** represents the personal and professional relationships that a person builds while they are getting their degree. For the purposes of our analysis, the network of relationships that a person builds during college is valuable only insofar as that network can be leveraged to access other things of value (i.e. employment opportunities, mentorship, financial support, career advice, professional vouching, letters of recommendation, etc). A relevant framework for understanding the network value of a degree is Pierre Bourdieu's conception of social capital, which he defines as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

This is undoubtedly a non-negligible part of a degree's value; however, value is contingent on the formation of relationships with individuals who have access to other valuable resources that might be shared or exchanged. As one might expect, the relationships that are formed by students at "elite" colleges are mediated, to some extent, by social identity, which can lead to the formation of inequities of network value that are based on race and class.<sup>96</sup> It goes without saying that the nature and monetary value of resources that are shared and exchanged among a fraternity of affluent white guys are bound to look different than those moving through a group of students at a Low-Income Center.<sup>97</sup>

- **Employment Value** represents the increased likelihood of employment and potential earnings that a person can expect after they've completed their degree. This is perhaps the most significant component of a degree's value and certainly the most easily quantified. First, study after study has found that unemployment rates among college graduates are consistently lower than unemployment rates among people without a college degree. Second, while studies show that college

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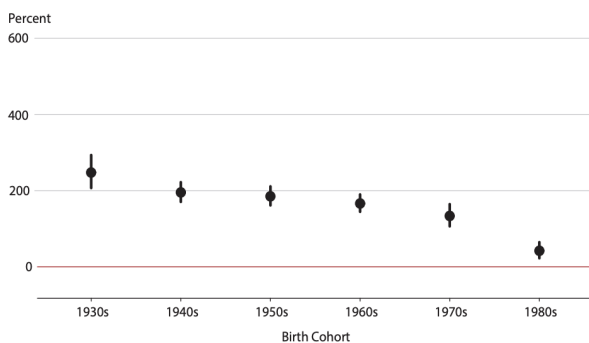
<sup>96</sup> [Here](#)'s a cluster of texts related to the race and class dynamics of college social networks.

<sup>97</sup> This is not to say that there is no value in the networks formed by low-income students or students of color. Rather, this is to say that the *wealth* that exists within affluent, white networks is likely to exceed and be kept from low income students and students of color.

graduates can expect an income premium (i.e. higher incomes than their non-degree holding counterparts), the size of the premium is incredibly dependent on the graduate's major. In [a 2015 report from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce](#), researchers found that there was a salary gap of nearly \$40,000 between the highest and lowest paid college majors (engineering/architecture and education respectively). But here's the real tea, [a 2019 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#) showed that income premiums have been falling slowly for several decades and that wealth premiums have essentially collapsed, presumably because of rising tuition costs and the accompanying debt burdens. In particular, the expected wealth premium for white families headed by a person who was born in the 1980s and received a Bachelor's degree is at an all time low. For Black families, it's statistically indistinguishable from zero! You'd be right to wonder what good an income premium is if it only goes toward financing the debt you acquired to secure the premium in the first place.

**Figure 11**

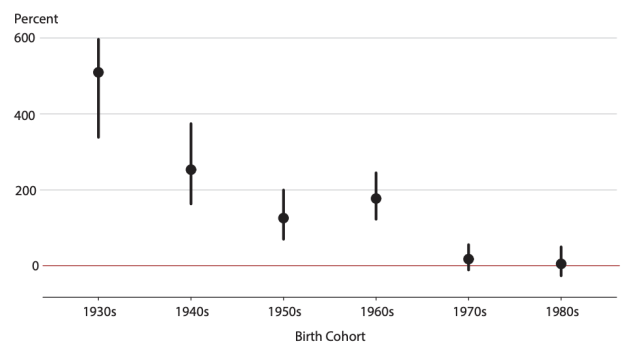
Expected Wealth Premium, White Bachelor's Degree Families, by Cohort



SOURCE: SCF and authors' calculations.

**Figure 12**

Expected Wealth Premium, Black Bachelor's Degree Families, by Cohort



SOURCE: SCF and authors' calculations.

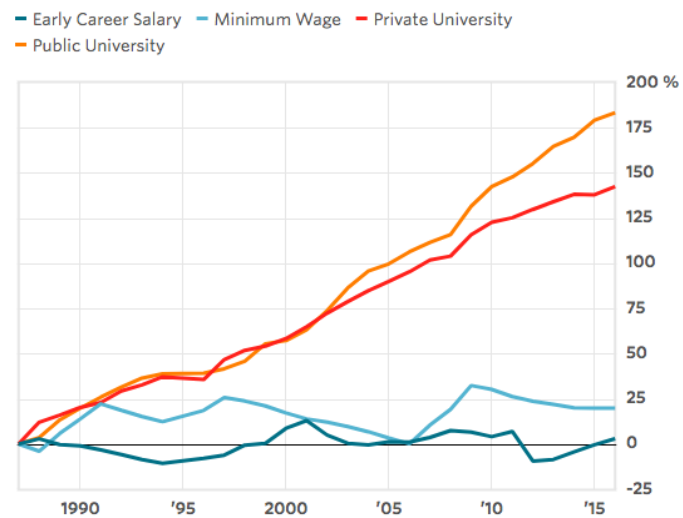
Economist hat off (or keep it on if you're nasty like that)! This is an incredibly crude and economic analysis of a degree's value. Of course, the relationships that we make and the care that we receive are valuable in and of themselves regardless of whether they can be leveraged to get other things! That said, attending university is not a precondition for making meaningful friendships or life-long memories nor is it a precondition for expanding your intellectual horizons, contrary to what some advertising might have you believe. These things can and *do* happen outside of the university all the time. The university is just here to provide you with a credential. To say that you did

it. To say that you're smarter than the next person because you were wealthy enough to cover the cost or low-risk enough to get it for free.<sup>98</sup>

So, is there a higher education price bubble? Are people going to stop paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for degrees from private universities? Is it all worth it? Maybe. Maybe not.<sup>99</sup> The answer will depend significantly on the expected network and employment value that a person's degree carries and how much they have to pay for it, but for more and more people, the answer is a resounding, "No!" Smaller liberal arts colleges all over the United States have been closing because of falling enrollment, and things don't look like they'll be getting better any time soon.<sup>100</sup> Harvard Business School professor [Clayton Christensen predicts that half of all US colleges will be bankrupt in 10 to 15 years](#).<sup>101</sup> Further still, COVID-19 and the rise of [Zoom University](#) have poked serious holes in the logic of our current educational paradigm. The backdrop for all of this is that [while tuition costs have been climbing steadily throughout the neoliberal era, real wages have stagnated](#) and debt burdens continue to get larger and larger. *Something* has to give, and as we watch the social, political, and economic turmoil all around us, it's evident that things are going to start to give now!<sup>102</sup>

### Tuitions rise, salaries don't

Percentage change since 1987, adjusted for inflation



Source: National Center for Education Statistics; National Association of Colleges and Employers; U.S. Department of Labor

<sup>98</sup> Yes, they think we're low risk! "Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society. When you trap people in a system of debt, they can't afford the time to think." – Noam Chomsky.

<sup>99</sup> [Here's](#) a cluster of texts related to the value of a degree and the higher education price bubble.

<sup>100</sup> [Here's](#) a cluster of texts related to recent college and university closures.

<sup>101</sup> To track the closing and merging of public and private universities, [look no further](#).

<sup>102</sup> The turmoil I'm referring to is the economic depression (and period of [secular stagnation](#) – yikes even worse) we're likely about to enter, COVID-19, nationwide protests against police brutality, rising inequality, the pervasiveness of rape and sexual assault, the ticking time bomb that is climate change and pension collapse, the rise of Big Brother surveillance, and the incredible amount of violence that's enacted on trans femmes of color – just to name a few things.

But if the bubble pops, we can't get caught sitting around. If we want to abolish Brown University and the like, we need to create strong alternatives, and we can't just wait to decide the details in the vacuum created by their absence because that vacuum will never come. Capitalism and the institutions that sustain it have endured for centuries because of their capacity to adapt, and the modern, private university is no less capable of adaptation. You best believe the administration is poised to protect this shit at all costs! And so as we hop from a mainstream economist's bubble pop theory to a Leninist Dual Power strategy, we need to think about how we can smash the status quo while simultaneously securing the economic and ideological breathing room to build the institutions of our wildest dreams.

### **Education but Make it for the People | alternatives to the private university**

The abolition of Brown University is a story that would probably go something like this: as it became apparent to young people that degrees in anything other than engineering, computer science, or pre-med were unlikely to create any real advantage on the job market, Brown's enrollment dwindled and students decided to pursue educational opportunities that, until recently, were relegated to the nerdiest and most Bernie-like corners of society. The following is a list of possible alternatives to the modern, private university.

- Free Public College and University:** The first and most obvious alternative to the private university is free public college and university. This concept has become a part of the mainstream political discourse in the US thanks, in part, to Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns. According to [the Sanders campaign](#) platform, tuition could be eliminated at colleges and universities all across the US for about \$48 billion a year. To get a sense of scale, the federal government spends about [\\$600 billion a year on the military](#), and just spent [\\$2.8 trillion in response to COVID-19](#) (in addition to the injection of trillions of dollars in monetary stimulus from the Federal Reserve). The government is more than capable of financing free public college and university. Further, at the risk of receiving eye rolls from orthodox economists, I'd encourage people who are still concerned about the cost of programs like this to explore [Modern Monetary Theory \(MMT\)](#). It provides a helpful framework (if somewhat controversial) for understanding why the United States is entirely capable of financing a project that's such a small fraction of the federal budget.
- Free Online Education:** In the wake of Zoom University à la coronavirus, free online education platforms complete with verified certification mechanisms are

becoming a more and more enticing concept. These types of platforms already exist but often have a cost associated with them if they include a certificate; popular examples include Khan Academy, edX, Coursera, and Udemy. Colleges and universities across the US have also seen a sustained increase in the number of students enrolling online with [a 263% increase from 2004 to 2016](#).<sup>103</sup> In large part, the infrastructure for a substantial free online education system already exists. The barrier to widespread use is the cost wall for accessing certificates, diplomas, and degrees. One solution could be the proliferation of government subsidies available for pursuing online certifications. Another solution could involve regional cooperative finance schemes, where communities finance students' education in exchange for labor commitments.<sup>104</sup> Think organized crowd-sourcing! A third solution to the cost wall might be the emergence of a massive open online course (MOOC) platform with credentials that are well-respected and that hold real employment value. Think the free and open source software movement but for education.<sup>105</sup> Fortunately, the employment value of online educational alternatives seems to be on the rise according to [a survey of CEOs and small business owners](#), 83% of whom say that online degrees are just as credible as those acquired through traditional means.

- **Independent Educational Institutions:** Perhaps the most exciting alternative is the possibility of independent educational institutions. Below are some possibility models that are worth more exploration:
  - [Mondragon University](#): While Mondragon University has a governance structure that's comparable to other private universities, Mondragon University is a worker cooperative owned collectively by the teachers, researchers, and staff at the university. Mondragon University is also a part of the Mondragon Corporation, which is the largest federation of worker cooperatives in the world.<sup>106</sup> A worker cooperative is essentially a business that is owned and managed by its workers. What makes Mondragon University an exciting possibility model is (1) its existence within a federation of cooperatives that are successfully competing against businesses that engage in capitalist modes of production and (2) its

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<sup>103</sup> [Here](#)'s a cluster of texts related to the rise of online education.

<sup>104</sup> If you're interested in cooperative finance, check out [this anthology](#)!

<sup>105</sup> Conversely, resist attempts by corporate giants like Amazon and Google to provide online education!

<sup>106</sup> Don't be scared by the word Corporation! it just means a group of people allowed to act as a single legal entity.



commitment to meeting the knowledge and labor related needs of the cooperative federation and society more broadly.

- [Freedom Library Day School:](#) In 1964, John E. Churchville founded the Philadelphia Freedom Library in a Ridge Avenue storefront in North Philadelphia. The library functioned as a Black community center committed to social change, and it was populated with thousands of books related to Black history and politics. During the library's infancy, Churchville started to offer evening classes, and eventually, the library was converted into a day school that stayed open until 1978. The curriculum for the school was dedicated to building the political consciousness of young Black people and equipping them with skills to struggle against racial injustice. The Freedom Library Day School is an exciting possibility model because while it served as an educational space it was also a site of radical organizing in the city of Philadelphia (although this did lead to an FBI raid on the school in 1966 that prompted Churchville to remove himself from more radical activism).
- [The Stelton Modern School:](#) In 1910, following the murder of anarchist pedagogue [Francisco Ferrer](#), a group of New York anarchists began organizing around the possibility of a school that would follow Ferrer's model. Not unlike the beginnings of the Freedom Library Day School, the group started an evening school that eventually expanded into a day school. On account of a bomb plot and police infiltration, the day school was relocated to a colony in Stelton, New Jersey in the mid-1910s. The principalship and ideological flavor of the school fluctuated a great deal, and there were several bouts of inactivity and dwindling enrollment, but the school existed for nearly 40 years until it closed in 1953. Stelton's history is unique, in part, because it was one of the first anarchist colonies built specifically to accommodate a school. Not without its flaws, Stelton is a helpful framework for thinking through the details of what a semi-isolated, radical boarding school might look like.
- [Paulo Freire Freedom Schools:](#) Inspired by the 1960s Freedom Schools and the pedagogical work of Paulo Freire, the Paulo Freire Freedom Schools were opened in 2005. Located in Tucson, Arizona, the Paulo Freire Freedom Schools are a particularly inspiring possibility model because they're a contemporary example of a school that resists the "banking model of education" that's critiqued in Freire's book, *Pedagogy of*



*the Oppressed*. With a commitment to the values of social and environmental justice, students are encouraged to engage in thought that contradicts the logics of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy. While this isn't uncommon at private universities, the Paulo Freire Freedom Schools can help us think through what it might look like to (1) organize a school around the philosophy espoused in Freire's writing and (2) bring the values of social and environmental justice to academic disciplines that are typically devoid of such considerations.

- [Summerhill School](#): In 1921, Alexander Sutherland Neill founded Summerhill School, an independent boarding school modelled after his principle of "freedom, not license." Summerhill School is an appealing possibility model because of its democratic organizational structure. Summerhill School is a self-governing community and allows for the equal participation of students in decisions that affect their daily lives, and while Summerhill students do not participate in the "business side" of things, this model provides a blueprint for what *meaningful* self-governance could look like at a university.
- [Mississippi Freedom Summer](#): In the summer of 1964, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) executed the Freedom Summer project, which consisted of more than 40 Freedom Schools being set up in Black communities throughout Mississippi with the purpose of expanding the political consciousness of Black youth and encouraging them to participate in the Civil Rights Movement. The program was attended by more than 2500 students that summer. This is an incredible organizational feat, and serves as a model for large scale mobilizations around political education. Moreover, [its curriculum](#) is incredibly dialogic! How lit would it be to ditch the lecture-style format of the Third World Transition Program (TWTP), turn it into a summer-length, Freedom School-esque retreat, and gradually build up its capacity so that it could function as its own year-round university? Third World University!

The proliferation of the alternatives presented above in combination with widespread knowledge of the (arguably) diminishing value of a degree will ultimately induce the collapse of tuition costs at private universities and, by extension, their budgets. The reign of the private university, the myth of Ivy League superiority, and all of the bullshit prestige will finally come to an end.

## Pouring the Gasoline | how to organize around the university's abolition

Based on the information presented above, what follows is a set of principles to help guide organizing that is devoted to (or in support of) the abolition of Brown University.

- **Hit them where it hurts!** Creating budgetary stress is absolutely essential if we want to limit Brown's operational capacity and potentially force it into bankruptcy.

<sup>107</sup> Below is a non-exhaustive list of tactics for doing just that.

Politicize as many donations as possible: protesting donations is an excellent way to reduce the university's revenue and doing so in a public way will discourage other potential donors from making contributions to the university. A fantastic example of this is [the Warren Kanders Must Go campaign](#) by EJ@Brown. To boot, if you want to make a little money while you're messing with the university's finances, apply to be a student caller for the Brown Annual Fund and be really bad at your job.

Sabotage admissions: lowering matriculation rates is an easy way to take advantage of the university's tuition-dependence. Tactics for admissions sabotage include: encouraging prospective students to consider other schools, particularly those that resemble the alternatives suggested above; disrupting admissions activities like ADOCH or campus tours; and zoom bombing admissions webinars.

Smear the university's reputation: smearing the reputation of the university will aid in both discouraging donations and reducing matriculation. Smear tactics include: launching social media campaigns or producing videos that are critical of the university and amplifying them in creative ways (e.g. anonymous posts on popular pages like Brown Bears Admirers, structuring engagement to manipulate news feed position in advance, starting live streams to effectively send notifications to all of a person's followers, leaking to mainstream press, etc); writing and distributing op-eds and essays that critique the university; linking to critical articles on the university's wikipedia page to increase their PageRank and visibility in search results; creating social media bots to hijack the university's social media campaigns.

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<sup>107</sup> It's also worth noting that beyond simply limiting the operational capacity of the university, hitting the university where it hurts will also provide leverage during negotiation for organizers who have demands that they'd like to make of the institution.

Manipulate institutional statistics connected to our ranking: similar to smearing, working to lower the university's ranking is another easy way to reduce donations and matriculation. Most ranking methodologies are a weighted sum of institutional statistics (that don't change much year-to-year), and if organizers are able to target and manipulate some of those statistics, this could pose a real threat to the university's prestige. For example, [the 2018 methodology for the Times World University Rankings](#) stipulated that 30% of a school's score would come from its research influence (i.e. citations). If there are researchers at the university engaged in oppressive research, it might be worth trying to launch an academic boycott against their work, thereby reducing the university's research influence and possibly its ranking.

Support divestment campaigns: divestment campaigns are likely to reduce the endowment payout because many of the companies targeted by these campaigns are wildly profitable and promise high returns for the endowment. Thus, divestment campaigns of any sort are an effective way to reduce the endowment payout and limit the university's operational capacity.<sup>108</sup>

Demand that Brown pay property taxes and reparations: property taxes and reparations are another straightforward way to limit the university's budget. As a "non-profit" institution, Brown is exempt from paying property taxes to the city of Providence. Instead, [Brown voluntarily provides a payment in lieu of taxes \(PILOT\)](#) of about \$4 million dollars per year (as of 2012). In contrast, if Brown were responsible for paying commercial real estate tax, it would owe the city an estimated \$38 million dollars per year!<sup>109</sup> In a similar vein and given [the findings of the infamous Slavery and Justice report](#), Brown should be responsible for more than just property taxes. At a moral minimum, the university should be made to provide a substantial program of reparations to Black and Indigenous communities in Providence, [a responsibility that it continues to shirk](#). [The recent movement for reparations at Georgetown University](#) provides a helpful model for thinking through what a movement like this might look like at Brown.

Funnel money out of the university: while funnelling money doesn't necessarily limit the university's budget in a *sustained* way, it does allow for the university's resources to be used in ways that challenge the status quo. Therefore, given Brown's parasitic relationship to the city of Providence, people with budgetary

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<sup>108</sup> You should also support divestment campaigns because the targets of these campaigns are often engaged in incredibly violent and oppressive behavior.

<sup>109</sup> \$38 million dollars was an estimate from 2012, but it has likely risen over the last 8 years!

control (or the ability to request and access funding) should redirect as much money as possible to poor and working-class people in Providence, the Providence Public School District, and radical organizing taking place in the city. And if you're worried about getting caught: don't! So much of the money that moves through the university is no strings attached, and if necessary, you can get creative in justifying your expenses!

Advocate for a tuition freeze: rather intuitively, a tuition freeze (nominal or inflation-adjusted) would prevent Brown from continuing to extort more and more money from its students.

- **Invest in and build up alternatives now!** Create competitive institutions that make the decision not to work at or attend Brown easier and easier. Support movements for free public college and university. Start study groups or community centers and grow them into institutions like the Freedom Library Day School or Mondragon University. For people who go on to work as hiring managers, evaluate candidates on their capacity to do the work that is asked of them and allow people to demonstrate that capacity in a multitude of ways (i.e. through certificates, work history, diplomas, portfolios, etc). Remember that graduates from “elite” institutions aren’t all they’re cracked up to be, and quit bending the knee to the almighty Ivy degree!
- **Protect the livelihoods of workers and marginalized people in this institution!** The objective of this political orientation is to improve peoples’ lives, and this objective *must* continue to be the centerpiece of all #BurnBrown-esque organizing. That said, one of the first critiques that is usually launched in response to political movements that limit the university’s budget is that students on financial aid or precarious, temporary workers will be disposed of first. And this is probably true! For this reason, we must engage in advocacy that protects the material interests of vulnerable workers and students that are wrapped up in Brown in the here and now. Support unionization and struggles like [#SaveTheBCSC](#). Resist layoffs for vulnerable staff and faculty members. Fight to protect and expand financial aid for low-income students, and do so in a way that is collective and not limited by shame or individualism. If and when these things fail, support students and workers in their lives outside of the institution. Help people secure decent work and housing. Live what it means [“to be in and not of”](#) the university. And perhaps most of all, encourage others who are considering Brown to think about the alternatives. Remind prospective students that [social mobility indexes](#) are incredibly low at Brown and that [their chances of receiving](#)

[some of the highest employment value degrees is much higher at other institutions \(especially for Black and Latinx students\)](#). Remind them that “elite” colleges are sites of indoctrination where students often abandon their aspirations to fight against social and economic injustice. Remind them that their worth is not defined by the school that they chose to attend when they were 18. Remind them that they deserve better and that better is possible.

- **Coordinate with students at other universities!** Brown is not unique. As a former student organizer there, I chose to center Brown in this analysis, but the #BurnBrown orientation can and should be applied to private universities all across the US. Bearing this in mind, a broader movement to abolish the private university might run into problems if it lacks coordination. For example, if students from a large number of schools organize around the goal of encouraging prospective students to choose other universities, this might result in what is effectively a swap of student populations as opposed to a fall in the student population of any one university. Thus, a more coordinated approach might include the sequential targeting of universities so that students at some schools are working to absorb prospective students and others are working to encourage them to go to the absorbing schools. Toppling schools’ enrollment sequentially may prove to be an extended process, so it’s also worth thinking about how to make movements like this sustainable. Nevertheless, tanking a university’s enrollment for even a single year could cause revenues to fall so significantly that the corresponding budget cuts induce a phenomenon similar to [human capital flight](#), where employees of the institution jump ship to find better opportunities elsewhere. Some of this human capital flight is bound to be absorbed by other private institutions, but as the strength of free and public alternatives grows, an increasing fraction of this flight will be absorbed by said alternatives, consequently accelerating the enrollment toppling process!
- **When the university is at its most vulnerable:** answer the call to action made in the piece [Neocolonial Providence](#) and organize a general insurrection to expropriate all capital, land, and other assets that belong to the university; destroy all of the university’s administrative, governing, and policing bodies; establish mechanisms for the popular control of the university’s resources by Indigenous and Black populations of the hemisphere, as well as poor and working-class residents of Rhode Island; place all of the university’s land under the stewardship of the Indigenous nations it was stolen from.

**Striking the Match | what now?**

*First we'll come for the bear, and they will not be able to control us—*

*Because we cannot be controlled.*

*Then we'll come for the pilgrim, and they will not be able to stop us—*

*Because we cannot be stopped.*

*Then we'll come for the ivy, and they will not be able to contain us—*

*Because we cannot be contained.*

*Then we'll come for them all—and they will be ours for the taking.*

Burn, build, and bring Brown to its knees. Gaggggggg! <3

### **Resources that Influenced this Essay**

- Texts about Brown's corrupt, immoral, and oppressive conduct:
  - WikiLeaks revealing a lack of admissions integrity ([part 1](#) & [part 2](#)) courtesy of the Guardians of Peace
  - [Neocolonial Providence](#) by Servius G
  - [Housing Activist Asata Tigray On Gentrification In Providence](#) by Andrew Stewart
  - [Brown University, PILOTS, and Tax-Exemptions](#) by I. Harry David
  - [Campus Life Speaking Truth Statement](#) by Speaking Truth DCL
  - [Paxson defends donations](#) after critiques by students and faculty are launched about contributions from the [Koch Brothers](#) and [Warren Kanders](#)
  - [Paxson's response](#) to the Brown Divest referendum
  - [Paxson's response](#) to #BlackWalk50 [demands](#)
  - [Po Metacom Camp announcement](#) and [SAPMC statement](#)
  - [Remembering Race at Brown](#)
  - [Visionary Organizing at Our University](#) by Stoni Tomson
  - [\(Re\)Imagining Brown 250+](#) by Phoebe Young
- Texts about the theory of social reproduction:
  - Wikipedia: [Social Reproduction](#)
  - Encyclopedia.com: [Social Reproduction](#)
  - Khan Academy: [Social Reproduction](#)
  - [Social Reproduction and College Access](#) by Gabriel R. Serna and Rebecca Woulfe

- [The Undercommons](#) by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney: a book that is helpful for thinking through how to embody subversiveness while existing within a university.
- “The Racial Bribe—Let’s Give It Back” (pg. 231-8) from [The New Jim Crow](#) by Michelle Alexander: a critique of tokenism, exceptionalism, and the shortfalls of affirmative action.
- [The Fall of the Faculty](#) by Benjamin Ginsberg: a book that discusses the rise of administrations at universities in the US.
- [“An Introduction to Dual Power Strategy”](#) by Brian A. Dominick: a helpful piece for understanding the dynamics of transition and strategies for the abolition of oppressive regimes.
- [Leverage Points](#) by Donella Meadows: a great little piece about systems theory that explores how to effectively manipulate systems.
- [“The Forms of Capital”](#) by Pierre Bourdieu: a theory that postulates three kinds of capital: economic, cultural, and social.
- [Postcapitalism](#) by Paul Mason: a book that describes an emerging alternative to capitalism that embraces the powers of information technology and automation.
- Texts about the race and class dynamics of college social networks:
  - [Peer Social Networks Among Low-income Students At An Elite College](#) by Eric J. Kaplan
  - [Race and Class Matters at an Elite College](#) by Elizabeth Aries
- Texts about the value of a degree and the higher education price bubble:
  - The Atlantic: [The College Wealth Premium Has Collapsed](#)
  - Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: [Is College Still Worth It?](#)
  - The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce: [The Economic Value of College Majors](#)
- Texts about recent college and university closures:
  - CNBC: [The other college debt crisis: Schools are going broke](#)

- Boston.com: [The 'perfect storm' behind the recent college closings and how it could change New England](#)
- U.S. News & World Report: [The Higher Education Apocalypse](#)
- Forbes: [The End Of College Is Coming](#)
- Texts about the rise of online education:
  - World Economic Forum: [The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever. This is how](#)
  - CNN: [Employers on online education](#)
  - StraighterLine: [A Brief History Of Online Learning](#)
  - Online Learning Consortium: [Sizing the Opportunity](#)
  - Online Learning Consortium: [Class Differences](#)
  - National Center for Educational Statistics: [Enrollment and Employees in Postsecondary Institutions](#)

**Disclaimer:** this essay does not advocate for the use of arson and is not responsible for any arson that takes place at Brown or any other private university.



“CPax, stop trying to make the Ivy League happen! It’s not going to happen!”

– Regina George



“See? That’s the thing with you senior administrators. You think everybody is in love with you when actually, everybody HATES you!

Like, you all talk about ‘diversity and inclusion,’ for example, but guess what? You’re still helping to prop up a racist, imperialist institution! So why are you still messing with Christina and Russell and Barbara and Eric and their BS, racist tokenism? I’ll tell you why, because you are a mean girl!  
You’re a bitch!”

– Janis ian

