

452 / Abstract

Alaysia Jetter

Abstract:

Aspiring black student creatives at a predominantly white institution (PWI) lack high representation of other black creatives in their field. More representation from current black creatives that are successful is needed to properly support, teach, and influence aspiring black creatives to pursue their intended field. In order to provide more representation in creative fields, focusing on black high school students to want to pursue these professions after graduating high school will increase the amount of representation seen through colleges and the creative fields.

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A large number of black students capable and/or interested in creative based majors at PWI's are not pursuing the careers. Aspiring black student creatives' numbers, 8.5%, compared to white aspiring creatives, 73.8%, are slim to none in most cases especially at predominantly white institutions (PWI) according to an article titled *The Racial Divide in the Creative Economy* by Richard Florida (2016). The identification of black student creatives gives the opportunity of incoming black students to view that they are not alone in their aspirations/interests. Black students are more prone to study within STEM majors and such in comparison to the fine arts due to future thoughts on obtaining a large amount of stable income as well as being influenced by others to pursue those fields. Being at a predominantly white institution makes the search to see other black students in their classes and even in their everyday student life more crucial considering the amount/percentage of students that make up that specific PWI will be considerable low compared to their white counterparts. Appealing to black high school students will prepare those students for their college and future aspirations along with providing enough information about the creative field options for them to make their own decision on whether to pursue the creative arts.

Giving opportunities to black students, especially when their opportunities, resources, and success rate are more limited in comparison to their white counterparts, is important. It is critical to give equal opportunities to these students along with influencing a cycle of black creative growth in order to increase diversity in the current creative community.

This project will provide a model for a solution to address the importance of representation of black students and professionals in the arts and ways to promote growth of aspiring black creative students. Informing black students of their creative options and how these options can affect their future is one of the main facets to promote growth especially if this information is introduced to black students before college.

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Observation: Black high school student creatives are not as inclined to pursue a creative field in college.

Argument/Proposition: More representation from contemporary, successful black creative professionals are needed to properly support and influence aspiring black high school creatives to pursue their intended field.

What research backs up your argument?

- **From PRB.org:** This stated information based on the social and economic isolation towards urban African Americans. It explains basic resources that are lacking especially in urban areas along with comparing the information founded to information in regard to their white counterparts. <https://www.prb.org/thesocialandeconomicisolationofurbanafricanamericans/>

- **The Root:** This article explains the importance of black curators and why they are still not highlighted enough within the art community. The article also compares their information to their white counterparts in order to give perspective towards the issue. <https://www.theroot.com/of-art-and-plunder-why-black-curators-are-still-shut-o-1825133727>.

- **BFAMFAPhD:** A report created in order to provide information on the working artist career along with relating it back to people who have gained a degree in some sort of visual art. The report gathers statistical information to educate about the financial aspects of working artists and art school graduates. The report explains the current conditions and recommends ways towards change and action. http://bfamfaphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BFAMFAPhD_ArtistsReportBack2014-10.pdf. On their website, they also focus on advocating for cultural equity within the arts. <http://www.bfamfaphd.com>

- **City Lab:** An article from City Lab titled The Racial Divide in the Creative Economy by Richard Florida explains the apparent divide between white and people of color creatives in regard to cities/areas that have more opportunities for white creatives in comparison to people of color. Richard Florida elaborates on his conclusion with statistics that cater towards explaining the ratio of people who are employed in the creative arts in different areas of the United States. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2016/05/creative-class-race-black-white-divide/481749/>.

Audience: For black high school creatives aspiring for a profession in the creative field.

Audience value: Assisting these individuals in some way will help promote the importance of black high school students learning about their options and the opportunities in the creative field.

What is your intention with the outcome?: 01: To educate

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Keywords relative to this project:

Systematic Oppression: the systematic mistreatment of people of color within a social identity group which is supported and enforced by the society and its institutions.

Black creative: an individual who is black that is interested or participates in creative outlets.

Creative field: A field of work relating to the creative arts such as design.

Visual arts (or arts in general): the arts created primarily for visual perception, as drawing, graphics, painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts.

Equal Opportunities: Opportunities in the arts that can be offered to black students as well as their white counterparts that have the same positive result and do not alter based on who the offer is being offered to.

What this project is not: This project is not going to belittle other races/ethnicities/cultures. It will also not diminish the fact that other minority groups may need the same resources as well.

Anticipated form: A website that includes branding aspects that will allow black individuals to connect with black creative professionals in creative fields to assist them.

What expert will you be speaking with + why + when: Mainly will be speaking with black educators and/or artists.

John Jennings is a scholar and artist whose artistic work is deeply influenced by the African American cultural experience and explores intersectional narratives linked to identity.

Althea Murphy-Price, a visual artist who is also a woman of color. Her input in regard to black individuals in the visual arts field will be beneficial especially because she is also one of few black instructors in the art and architecture building.

Christopher "C-Ray" Rayson, a black visual artist from Dallas, Texas that mainly creates large-scale portraits and is highly recognized. He is well-known based on his social media following on instagram, 40.9k followers.

Kalin Renee is a visual artist and woman of color from Charlotte, North Carolina that specializes in large-scale oil paintings.

Danielle Render, a black clothing designer for black greek-letter organizations (National Pan-Hellenic Council fraternities and sororities). She is based in Georgia and is continuing to grow everyday.

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Precedents:

Organization of Black Designers: is a national professional organization of interior, industrial, architectural, fashion and graphic designers dedicated to “embrace and improve the totality of the American design professions by energizing them with creative diversity.” It provides information on jobs, ability to connect with design professionals, and feature design professionals and students. <http://obd.org/>

Studio Institute: artist-taught visual arts programs for schools that originated in NYC. The programs hire professional artists to teach, and reach children and students from pre-K through college. <https://studioinstitute.org/>

Revision Path: an “award-winning weekly interview podcast that focuses on showcasing some of the best Black graphic designers, web designers, and web developers from all over the world. On each episode, we explore the stories, processes, experiences, insights, and creative inspirations of these awesome creators.” Provides an archive of podcast interviews of successful black designers, but it lacks a heavy personal connection and interaction with the audience. <https://revisionpath.com/>

Recreate: A website that connects students to mentors that are available. These mentors can be filtered based on location and topic. <http://www.re-create.com/>

Anticipated Deliverables:

- Website
- Logo