

Black Student Power: From #BBUM to Mizzou
History 195 Campus Activism "Teach-In"
Austin McCoy
November 11, 2015
#BBUM2MU





Teach-In: An Opportunity

ALL STUDENTS and faculty should attend as many portions of tonight's Viet Nam "teach-in" as they can.

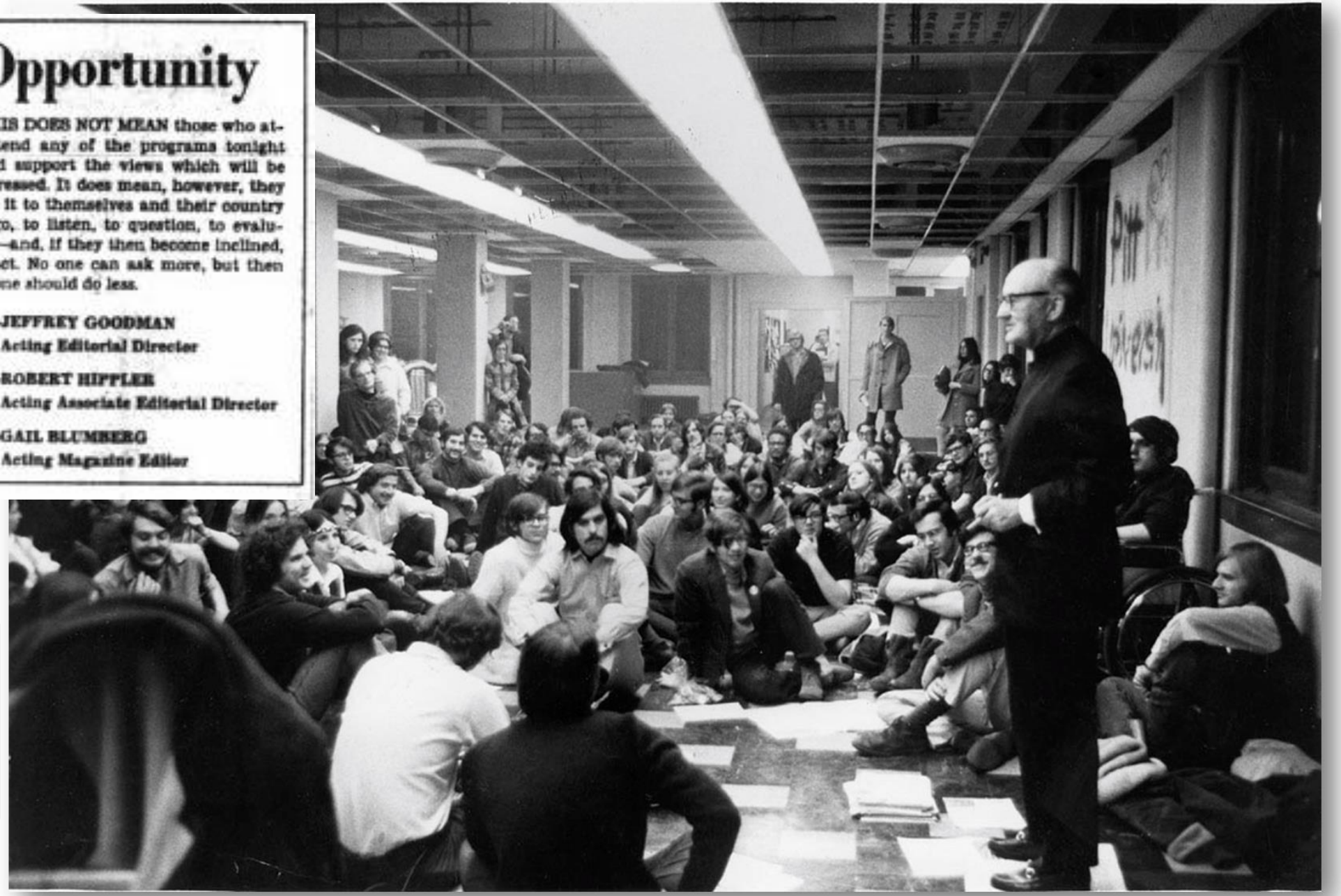
Examples of conspicuous, organized faculty and student action on pressing national issues are rare on this campus. They indicate, if nothing else, a concern for greater popular participation in policy-making that is undoubtedly healthy for a democratic society. If such efforts are not to be continually shrugged off as ineffectual, if citizens—whatever their occupation—are not to continue to be apathetic about important issues, then these efforts must at least be taken seriously.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN those who attend any of the programs tonight need support the views which will be expressed. It does mean, however, they owe it to themselves and their country to go, to listen, to question, to evaluate—and, if they then become inclined, to act. No one can ask more, but then no one should do less.

—JEFFREY GOODMAN
Acting Editorial Director

—ROBERT HIPPLER
Acting Associate Editorial Director

—GAIL BLUMBERG
Acting Magazine Editor



UM "Teach-In" (1965)

The Argument: Context, Movement-Building, Institutional Failure

- Important to not just pay attention to results of recent actions.
- Historical context, movement-building and organizing, and institutional failure are important.
- Will use #BBUM & UCRJ as primary examples.



Historical context

- Institutional failure to keep black enrollment consistent
- Legacy of prior student movements
- Legal assault on affirmative action



Failure in diversity policy??
Black enrollment numbers, 1966-2014

- 1966—1.2
- 1970—3.5
- 1972—6.6
- 1984—5.1
- 1996—9
- 2007—6.8
- 2010—5
- 2014—4.6

Source: James D. Anderson, Expert Report (2003); UM Office of Registrar, Ethnicity Reports: http://ro.umich.edu/enrollment/ethnicity.php

Black Student Protest and Enrollment

- BAM I (1970)—black enrollment: 3.5
- BAM II (1975) & BAM III/UCAR (1987)—black enrollment declined from 6.6% in 1972 to 5.1% in 1984
- #BBUM (2013-2014)—black enrollment: 4.2%

BAM I Demands (1970):

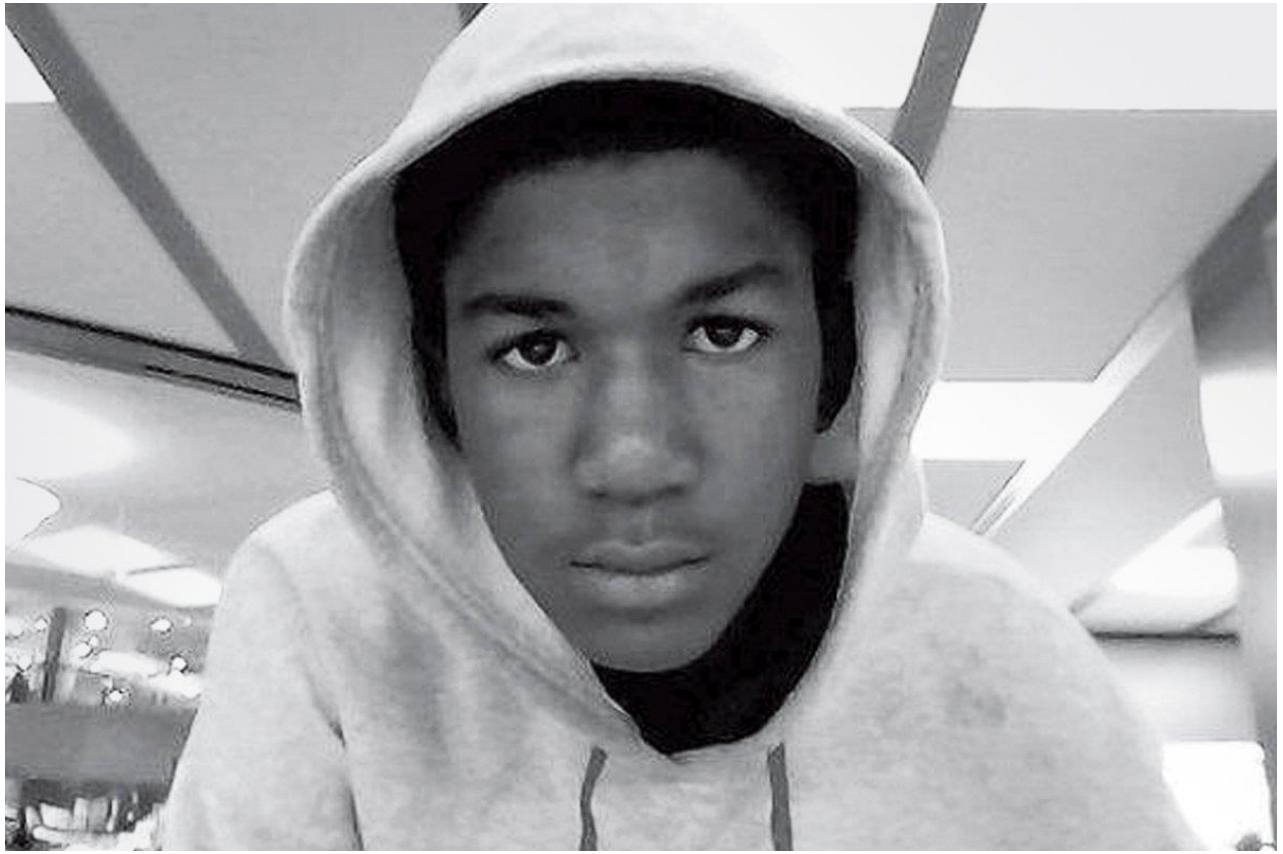
1) Ten percent Black enrollment by Fall 1973.
2) Nine hundred new Black students by Fall 1971 – 450 freshman, 150 transfers, 300 graduate students.
3) An adequate supportive services program, including financial aid to finance Black students' education.
4) Graduate and undergraduate recruiters (9) to recruit Black students.
5) A referendum to the March Student Government Council ballot to have students vote on assessing themselves $3.00 for one year for the Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund.
6) Tuition waivers for minority group students who are also residents of the state of Michigan.
7) The establishment of a community-located Black Student Center
8) All work of a permanent nature on the Black studies program is to be halted until an effective input is fully developed by a community-University forum.
9) The creation of a University-wide appeal board to rule on the adequacy of financial aid grants to students.
10) A revamping of the Parent's Confidential Statement.
11) There should be one recruit for Chicano students to assure fifty Chicano students by Fall 1970.
12) Black students are to be referred to as Black, not Negro or anything else.

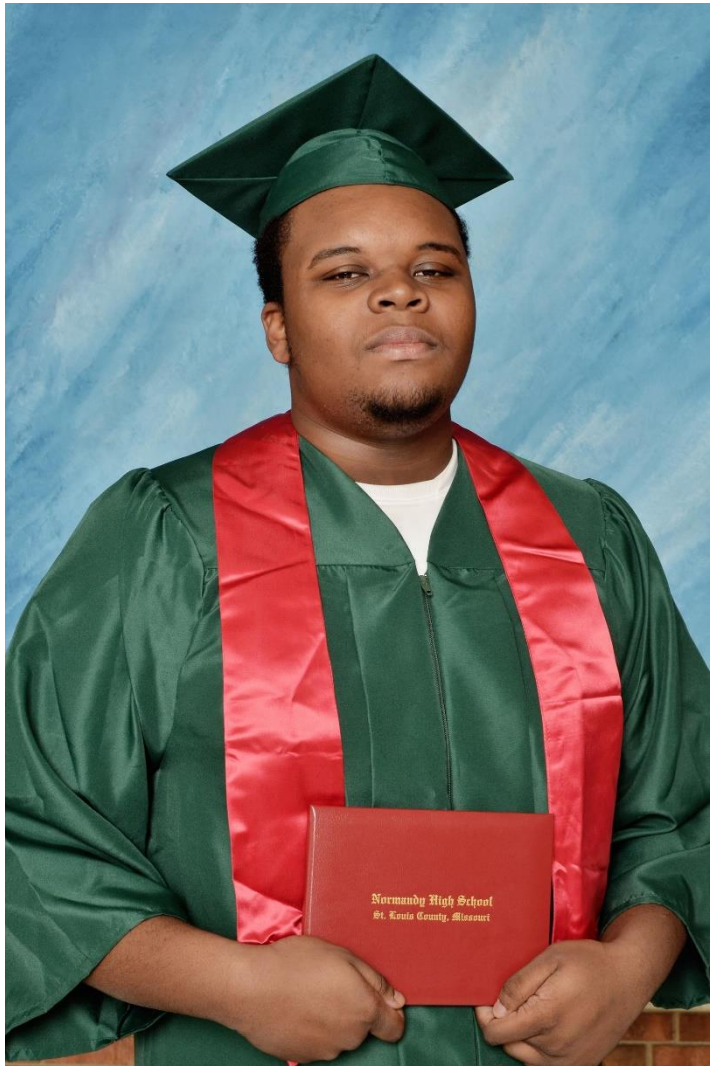
External forces influencing protest

- Recent killings of African Americans
- Other student movements
- Changing racial politics
  - Failure of diversity
  - Colorblindness & “post-racial America”
  - Microaggressions
  - Reassertions of black autonomy

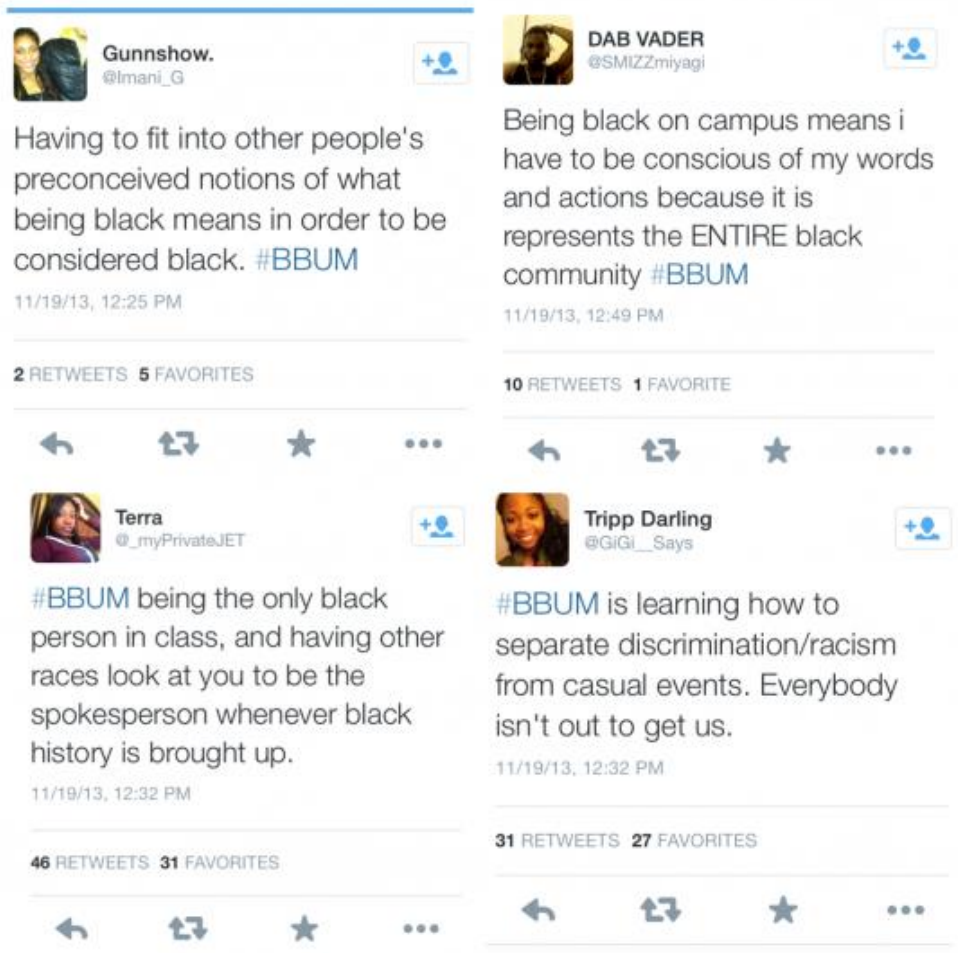


National Context
Police killings: Trayvon Martin & Michael Brown





Local context
Grievances & “Hood Ratchet Thursday”





#Being Black at the University of Michigan

The Black Student Union (BSU) launched #BBUM in November 2013. It started trending nationally the day of the freeze out follow up. Students sent hundreds of tweets discussing their experiences as black students on campus.



United Coalition for Racial Justice

Garrett, Tatiana Cruz, and I founded the United Coalition for Racial Justice (UCRJ) after the mass meeting. Jennifer Alzate eventually joined our leadership team.

UCRJ was coalitional. We worked with activists from several organizations including BSU, the Hip Hop Congress, and the Graduate Employee's Organization (UM's graduate student labor union).



Racial Justice Demands: #BBUM & Legion of Black Collegians (#Concerned Student 1950)

- We demand that the university give us an equal opportunity to implement change, the change that complete restoration of the BSU purchasing power through an increased budget would obtain.
- We demand available housing on central campus for those of lower socio-economic status at a rate that students can afford, to be a part of university life, and not just on the periphery.
- We demand an opportunity to congregate and share our experiences in a new Trotter [Multicultural Center] located on central campus.
- We demand an opportunity to be educated and to educate about America's historical treatment and marginalization of colored groups through race and ethnicity requirements throughout all schools and colleges within the university.
- We demand the equal opportunity to succeed with emergency scholarships for black students in need of financial support, without the mental anxiety of not being able to focus on and afford the university's academic life.
- We demand increased exposure of all documents within the Bentley (Historical) Library. There should be transparency about the university and its past dealings with race relations.
- We demand an increase in black representation on this campus equal to 10 percent.

1. We demand that University of Missouri System President, Tim Wolfe, writes a hand-written apology to Concerned Student 1-9-5-0 demonstrators and holds a press conference in the Mizzou Student Center reading the letter.

2. We demand the immediate removal of Tim Wolfe as UM system president. After his removal, a new amendment to the UM system policies must be established to have all future UM system president and Chancellor positions be selected by a collective of students, staff, and faculty of diverse backgrounds.

3. We demand that the University of Missouri meets the Legion of Black Collegians' demands that were presented in the 1969 for the betterment of the black community.

4. We demand that the University of Missouri creates and enforces comprehensive racial awareness and inclusion curriculum throughout all campus departments and units, mandatory for all students, faculty, staff and administration. This curriculum must be vetted, maintained, and overseen by a board comprised of students, staff and faculty of color.

5. We demand that by the academic year 2017-18, the University of Missouri increases the percentage of black faculty and staff members campus-wide by 10 percent.

6. We demand that the University of Missouri composes a strategic 10-year plan on May, 1 2016 that will increase retention rates for marginalized students, sustain diversity curriculum and training, and promote a more safe and inclusive campus.

7. We demand that the University of Missouri increases funding and resources for the University of Missouri Counseling Center for the purpose of hiring additional mental health professionals, particularly those of color, boosting mental health outreach and programming across campus, increasing campus-wide awareness and visibility of the counseling center, and reducing lengthy wait times for prospective clients.

8. We demand that the University of Missouri increases funding, resources and personnel for the social justice centers on campus for the purpose of hiring additional professionals, particularly those of color, boosting outreach and programming across campus and increasing campus-wide awareness and visibility.

The UCRJ Campaign

- The “Speak Out”
- Organizing; movement- and coalition-building
- Reframing the debate and changing the narrative
- More coalition building—taking advantages of divisions among elites
- Executing and using history



Some outcomes, some evaluations

- BSU's budget doubled.
- Renovations of Trotter Multicultural Center with intent to build new one on central campus
- Race and Ethnicity Requirement Reform
- Bentley digitized documents
- More funds for students with transportation issues
- Campus wide diversity summit and action plan pending.
- UCRJ built network of organizers that spearheaded much of the #BlackLivesMatter work on the campus and in the community.



Questions to consider for discussion

- Was the recent protest in Missouri an anomaly? Or could students use their methods elsewhere?
- How do these movements envision university life?
- Can we identify the ways in which student activists at Missouri and Yale are trying to advance their own narratives?

Ground Rules for Discussion

- Respect the class culture
- Do not talk while others are talking.
- Do not talk over your peers.
- Listen if/when there is a disagreement.