

## **12/5/13 Supper Summit: IND ART EDU**

Thursday December 5, 2013, 5-8PM  
Independent Arts Education Supper Summit  
at Gray Center Lab, 929 E. 60th St.

With participation from Miguel Aguilar, Sara Black, Eunyoung Chae, Leslie Buxbaum Danzig, Billy Dee, Faheem Majeed, Ed Marszewski, Carla Mayer, Laurie Palmer, Mary Patten, Claire Pentecost, Anthony Romero, Sarah Ross, Abigail Satinsky, J. Soto, and Nicholas Wylie.

Guest presentation by Adam Bush of College Unbound.

Further information is at [never-the-same.org](http://never-the-same.org)

**DANIEL TUCKER (DT):** Thanks for being here. My name is Daniel. Basically the format that I was hoping is that for the next hour or so we could do introductions and people could share three to five minutes about what kind of work you've been doing specifically in relation to this theme of independent art educational work. Some of you I know work at universities and that certainly is part of this conversation as well but I think that everyone here that does work in a university is also somehow involved in educational work outside of that space so if you could maybe speak to both of those. And I think maybe just as a beginning point in terms of why we are doing this with Never the Same. Most of you are familiar with what Never the Same has been doing this year but just as a sort of foundation for us to all share... One of the things that Rebecca Zorach and I have been doing who have had a fellowship here at the Grey Center have done with this year is to really experiment with the kind of organization that we want to develop Never the Same into and our certain foundation is that we have this ephemera archive and we have an interview series we do about the history of socially and politically engaged art in Chicago... But beyond that, what we have been figuring out a little bit is what kind of public face we want to have with that work. So we've done that through an exhibition, which some of you are involved with, and a symposium or two of them that some of you were involved with... And without going into the details of that, I think for us one of the things that this process has afforded us to think about is beyond the work we've been doing, what were the larger themes and currents we were concerned with and those basically include, as we sort of have identified them... Those include local art history, social movement culture, and grassroots archiving are kind of themes that we have continuously revisited. In conclusion, the reason that we wanted to convene tonight is that we have realized that in the process of doing these interviews and the archiving work, that on some level that that work is only meaningful if it is a jumping off

point for people to develop new projects and new directions. We aren't just into historical preservation, right? And so, that on one level means we want to start doing more public programming as a curatorial group, but what it also means is that we want to conceive of Never the Same as much more of a education project and some of the experiments that we've done this year is that Abbie and Fajeem taught a class at UIC where they utilized our interviews as curriculum in their class and then another thing is that we taught a seminar this summer that was a free adult ed seminar where people basically applied and we accepted folks and were actually able to use through the context of the fellowship, we were able to pay them to participate. So we got a lot of folks that are not in school and who just are not necessarily been have been at all on our radar had this been a University of Chicago class or something. And then, finally, beyond that, I think what we just realized is that instead of just sitting around preserving the all the really cool ephemera that we are excited about and into from this history, that that work, rather than just being archivist in the conventional sense, that that work could be most interesting and meaningful in the long-term if it is taken up by a community of educators who actually see it as a resource for their own educational work. Whether it is in the classroom or more independent kind of scholarship that people can be investing in the ephemera archive and the interviews as a kind of resource that requires a certain kind of pedagogical approach. And so, the idea with getting you all together is that that is something we all came to, that we were just reminded, "Oh yeah! We are super invested in this independent educational work and as a result we also know there's a lot of other people doing that work and so it is kind of a two part thing." One, we just wanted to get people together and talk and then also kind of with the idea that anytime you get people together there should be at least some conversation about how can there be resource sharing or what kind of things we do together. And so, on that note, is why I thought to invite Adam Bush to present who is going to present via Skype and the reason for that, Adam will explain his work, but is that Adam and the organization that he founded, College Unbound, have been figuring out how to work with community-based organizations and nonprofits and more independent kind of groups to figure out how to take the work that they are doing and translate it with as minimal of an intrusion and interference as possible, into a credit giving project for college credit and so he'll explain about that but I just sort of thought that sort of an outside voice that Adam could talk to us about that. So now lets just all introduce ourselves. Anyone have any questions? Adam, you still with us?

Okay, would anyone like to get started? And remember to speak up and please say your name when you speak so we can all follow.

**J.SOTO (JS):** Hi everyone, I'm J. I'm an artist and a teacher in Chicago. I teach at Chicago State University. I also teach sex education courses to adults in the other half of my life,

which I think is important too. As far as alternative teaching projects, one of the things I've been thinking about is creating an alternative school that looks at the power of public speaking or the speech-act as a tool to boost confidence, to make students more aware of histories, more interested in politics and thinking about speech-giving as performance. This project is called Shout School. It is something Anthony Romero and I have been tossing around for a while now and trying to find a home for, but also thinking about how it can kind of grow over time as an idea. One of the most important things for me with this particular project is that it be built upon a multi-generational model. I don't see that happening enough. That's what I'm interested in.

**SARA BLACK (SB):** Hi everyone. I'm Sara. I am a visual artist, educator and organizer. Over the years I have led a number of community based education projects in various contexts, largely in the vein of design/build. I am currently working at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Antioch reopened after a 4-year closure in 2011 and I joined them to help build the visual arts curriculum, programming and facilities. I was drawn to Antioch in part because of its cooperative education program, where students work in different contexts around the country and the world and receive college credit for these placements through a work-portfolio class. This class is essentially a reflection on their life and work experience. This is one of the reasons I am interested in talking with and meeting you Adam, because it relates to College Unbound quite directly. Historically, and currently, the experiences that Antioch students have in the co-op program are some of the most important to them. Experiential education is something I am very committed to and hope to bring to Chicago upon my return... I will be returning to Chicago next fall and teaching in the sculpture program at the School of the Art Institute. I am very excited to work with students in that context, but have also been generating ideas for a community-based educational project that I hope to develop outside of this formal educational context. I'm really trying to cook this thing. There are a few existing models of organizations that I've been researching from which I'd like to draw. A few I can mention include the Design Studio for Social Intervention in Boston, which I recently visited, The Boggs Center in Detroit, and the School of Life in London. All of these organizations collectively educate folks on skills that are scarcely taught in our institutions of higher education: activism skills as culled from on one's own life experience, design skills that can be applied to social and political struggles, mindfulness based stress reduction for isolated or traumatized communities, group communication skills, building skills. I am here to seek collaborators or generate models that might support this work.

**ANTHONY ROMERO (AR):** My name is Anthony Romero and I'm an artist and writer here in town. I've done some pedagogical experiments, aside from the project that J and I are working on together. I did another project earlier this year where myself and another

collaborator (Josh Rios) inserted a kind of temporary seminar into the art history department at Texas State University's course schedule. Together with a group of students we audited a series of classes and then in collaboration with those students we prepared evening lectures as responses to the curriculum that they were learning. One of the impulses behind the project was to think through how the classroom influences the production of knowledge, media, PowerPoint and so on, the performance of the professor, the language they are using and the context of the institution, all have an influence...to really begin to maneuver around the kind of architecture of education that we take for granted and the kind of normalizing of the production of knowledge. All of that is to say that the thing that I'm most interested in in relation to this meeting is how communities of difference and people of difference might use education and criticality as its own resource, and how that resource might have its own kind of currency, and to begin to think about pedagogy in that way, which I think is where J and I were going in terms of thinking about language as a starting part for speaking. It's about fundamentals.

**ABIGAIL SATINSKY (AS):** My name is Abby and I am organizer. I work for a nonprofit called ThreeWalls and I do a whole range of things there but one of the things I do is administer the Propeller Fund, which is a grant for public and collaborative oriented work which was a funder of Never the Same and a funder of a lot of people here but that's not why I'm here... But I've also been in conversation with a lot of people about working on stuff together. Me and Daniel have started to talk more about me starting to work more with the Never the Same archive and we are kind of doing some research with an upcoming project at SAIC about the socially engaged art history in Chicago. So I guess I'm more of a new teacher and so I'm trying to figure out what that kind of practice looks like and I'm really interested in learning and talking through that with other people. I did teach a class at UIC last year that was an Intro to Socially Engaged Art with students that weren't artists. So that was a really interesting process to talk through what it meant for them, to be interested in social issues and to also be interested in culture and have some conversations about how artists have and are now taking on these issues. So that was a really interesting experiment and using the Never the Same archive to ground that in a local history was actually good for the students. And that was my co-teacher Fajeem. And I was in New York recently and I met with a group that is a pedagogy group that is with a bunch of different kinds of educators that are working on how to teach in what is becoming a subject in a lot of art schools which is this kind of socially engaged art and sort of struggling about what it means to bring that stuff into the classroom and bring it out of the classroom and their roles as a facilitator in trying to figure out "is socially engaged artwork in the classroom a form of art or these sort of things," which is interesting to a degree and I think it is being formed by a lot of institutional focus on that stuff. So that kind of thing is interesting to me as something to think through. I will just leave it at that.

**LAURIE PALMER (LP):** My name is Laurie. I'm an artist and writer and educator also. I teach at the School of the Art Institute right now. There are two things that I want to talk about in relation to this invitation to come tonight. One is that I've been involved in some conversations with Amy Partridge who I hoped might be able to come but also Mary and Brian and some other people through reading Fred Moten and Stephano Harney's book on undercommons. But also, prior to that, thinking about how to use our positions in universities in a lateral way. So for instance, Amy teaches at Northwestern and I teach at SAIC and Brian is teaching at UIC, other people are at other institutions, and trying to think how we could generate clusters of ideas, and that we would start to teach similar ideas in different disciplines. Amy is in Women's studies. She is not teaching art. But similar clusters of ideas could happen through connections outside the university and then using our positions as lenses to reach the students and also generating laterally connected bodies. This is very abstract suddenly, but I think part of our conversations have been that the structures of teaching that we are involved in now are not going to last, they are not totally working, they are not accessible. How can we think about other structures in the meantime that might have a tooth and a sustainability that could go on beyond as these other structures become less usable. So that is one conversation. The other conversation is that Sarah Ross has started this amazing program in prisons and I am very peripherally involved but in my heart very involved with trying to understand what it means to teach in a situation where no one wants to give funding because "these guys are never going to get out." And so the whole idea of education not towards a job or not towards some practical, logistical use value but towards an investment in being as a human being.. that is one way that I understand what the Prison Neighborhood Arts Projects is doing, there's lots of other things that it's doing as well, but there's a dimension of that that I find so profound and that goes to the heart of why I want to be an educator and so that project also feels connected to what we are talking about.

**MARY PATTEN (MP):** We are all artists, educators, activists, and knowledge producers. This conversation connects to discussions in the impromptu reading group that Laurie referenced. We came together to read texts mindful of what is happening with organized education – higher education, Chicago public schools, and education in relationship to prison. The prison-school connection is a crucial framing. There are so many different and exciting projects dealing with radical pedagogies that need support; many of us are currently working with them, or have histories that inform that work. We have informal links with one other, but we could make more correspondences and connections, as well as deepen our collective knowledge base. Politically, what does it mean to teach in higher education now? I've had many years of experience teaching at the School of the

**Art Institute of Chicago.** I'm very grateful for this job, but I feel a discrepancy – I'm still trying to practice radical pedagogy in the classroom, but the situation is very, very limited. Who has the privilege and access to get into these classes? I really want to learn from what everyone here is doing. Some of us who have been working with the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials project have been talking about radical pedagogy, too. Like so many other art projects that aren't solely focused on education *per se*, pedagogy is still crucial.

**MIGUEL AGUILAR (MA):** My name is Miguel. I'm a Chicago native. I've been a practicing graffiti artist since 1989 and I teach a course in the art history department at SAIC called the "History of graffiti." I'm a fulltime CPS art teacher at Lindblom Math & Science Academy high school. And I'm involved in a collaborative called DIY MFA, which is a small cohort of art education people who totally hold each other accountable for a self-imposed rigorous experience of what an MFA would be. So there's that. And then I worked in nonprofits for a while, most recently at the National Museum of Mexican Art. I was a teen program coordinator there. I've also taught at Marwen and a couple of other places. And so, I've seen the autonomy of the social practice of graffiti and how awesome it is. And, that's my comfort area because I've seen it for so long and have been apart of it for so long. Now, I see all these art ed models that are trying to fit into a box, and that's not how we work. So, last year I founded something called the Graffiti Institute under the guidance of Theaster Gates. So, that's where I am.

**UNKNOWN:** What is the Graffiti Institute?

**MA:** It is an art investigation. It is really this initiative of access and mentoring. It focuses on giving teen mentees access to materials, space, and expertise. Some of the programming involves pairing up expert practitioners with mentees and letting them learn from each other as they collaborate on a graffiti mural.

**LESLIE DANZIG (LD):** My name is Leslie Danzig and my life on the side of here is as a theater and dance director. I work with Lucky Plush dance company and prior to that was the director for eleven years I ran was the founder of 500 Clown. And here I've been curator of the Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, which started in 2011 to be a form for experimental collaborations between artists and scholars. So, I'm here really just as the curator of the theater and the sort of project that has been happening. But I guess it has become interesting to me as I sort of figure out what this position is and what is happening, I'm just in a lot of moods hearing a whole array of projects, some of which bear no relationship to this and a lot actually which could potentially have some really interesting intersections of things. So, I guess it is a new idea for me to think about what do I do with the fact I'm

actively listening or I'm just in a bunch of really different kinds of conversations right now with a whole range of people from in town and out of town and the faculty here from all over the University.

**CLAIRE PENTECOST (CP):** I am Claire Pentecost and I also teach at the Art Institute. I am grateful to have a job. But you know, it is so distressing that it cost so much money and this whole development which is a system of higher ed which is about exploitation of wealth from the bottom and you know so I feel like I make my own living off of rabbits sometimes. But I'm really... But I really believe in education and I think though the kind of education I believe in is kind of disappearing. An education that is about helping someone create themselves and create a meaningful life really. So it is kind of a liberal arts tradition but now of course education is so much about getting jobs or providing labor. And I still teach the way I want to at the School of the Art Institute, but for a long time I thought about doing some kind of a more autonomous experiment. Because I work in an institution and I'm not a very good organizer and I don't want to be a nonprofit, I don't really think about how to arrange for credit, although maybe that's not leaving a task half done maybe. I don't know. I've been watching all these educational projects by artists, things like the Public School in LA. They tried to have one in Chicago too but they have had kind of franchises in other places and it seems like mostly it is educated artists who are going to these classes and making these classes and that's... I'd rather do a project that opens the circle. That would be the point. And I did teach last street at Statesville Florida prison neighborhood art Project that Laurie mentioned and Sarah Ross and some other people really got off the ground. I think it is an example of using education to surmount the mechanisms of isolation that go throughout our society like how different sectors are isolated from each other. So, I'm really interested in working with other people. I've done a lot of informal things that are collected autonomous learning, mostly about the place we live, about the region and looking at the ecologies of systems, like what actually sustains our lives? From the physical part to the need for community and validation....

**ED MARSZEWSKI (EM):** Hi, my name is Ed. Basically, I love this city because every once and awhile I get to hang out with people like you, just you all in the same room. So thank you for being here and letting me look at you and what you are up to. I don't really do anything except amplify what you guys do. Honestly, come on. So what happened is we started to have conversations like, "You know what, we do this co-prosperity school. Everyone seems to love it when they get to come in and meet people like yourselves, talk about what they love about Chicago, your careers, what you do..." Sharing your knowledge about what makes our ecology move or sink or decay. So...

**DT:** Can you say what the Co-Prosperity School is?

**EM:** Oh, the Co-prosperity school is a project that was started by a couple of people three or four years ago in which we meet with these weird little seasonal sessions from eight to seven week every Monday in the gallery office and we have a different presenter or guest talk about what they do. We share our knowledge about what's happening in Chicago art worlds in the various different disciplines and scenes. We try to help people figure out ways to get integrated or involved in these various different scenes. It is almost a way of.. If you moved here from wherever, didn't know what the hell was going on in Chicago, you went to a bunch of galleries, you went to a bunch of shows, didn't meet anybody, didn't know anyone. We are like the encounter group or continuing education group or post grad. So we help you assimilate and pick up someone else's keys so you can go home some time. Does that make sense? Do you guys like that analogy? The swing analogy? Anyways, I'm really interested in all the work that is being done here. It has inspired me. It allows me to stay here and feel great about living here and knowing people who give a shit and care about what's happening here. I think that my problem is that if I were a younger person and I wanted to attend one of your courses, I would be incapable of doing that. I couldn't go to every college. I might be able to develop a relationship with you and audit your class or shadow it or sneak into your class. I'm one of those guys that likes to reads every syllabus that all my favorite teacher put out. I want every single text. I want to have it even if I don't read it all, I know I could in the future. So my thought was... We've been able to do this informal thing. And what we've done is that we don't use the public school model in a sense or we don't use the free school model's notion where anyone can form a class and everyone can have free education. I realize too that no one has any time. Everyone who is working at these schools part-time is part of this pyramid scheme of the university thing. So my prompt was, since I've learned how to become a business person instantly, to actually earn income that supports my family, we have to develop a school, a thing, that allows everyone who already has their gigs to develop enough income and to also create some sort of accreditation either the co-op model or the model that Adam is going to discuss, for people who want to learn from the experts and awesome people we gather around this table. So, meaning, a weird school started, multiple facilities throughout the city. You guys create a class structure like a public school thing or discovery center thing or whatever model you want and you apply tuition with a maximum student thing and that tuition goes mostly goes towards that educator or that instructor and whatever the costs are needed to run the facility, run the marketing, pay someone to do accounting, etcetera. So the idea is to create a weird new superband where people play gigs once in awhile. There's a band manager. People get to go to the concerts and pay a fee for this continuing education process. So, I really want to help facilitate whatever you guys decide you want to do, provide space...but really, want to make sure that, I know it is super generous, but want to make sure that people actually get some sort of compensation, make it fair for the



students. But the reality is this guys. What it costs to go to your schools, the tuition and the fees for your classes are so astronomical, you guys know you need to get by to make your trip to this place. You guys can all figure out a way, what kind of pay scale is fair and what kind of tuition is fair to charge someone. And those additional fees includes to help figure some sort of administrative or official way of providing course credits for co-ops, etcetera, great. If not, just giving someone like me a young Ed Mar going to Chicago an opportunity to go to a school and see you guys and learn about what you are doing and not having to wait ten years and work ten years to figure this shit out, is a valuable skill for people who have the energy and time to get involved in this milieu we are involved in. These kids only have x of time to be converted in my opinion or activated and we need to give them the tools and ammunition to do as much as they possibly can and all of you guys are the people who made that happen. You are the ammunition, right? So, ideas. Whatever school you want. I'll find you some spaces. I'll have a big mouth. I'll help do promotional stuff, marketing stuff, whatever the hell you guys want. That's what I'm here for.

**SARAH ROSS (SR):** So my name is Sarah Ross and just sitting here it kind of dawned on me that I have actually taught in a lot of educational situations. I've taught at in prisons, at a community college, in a bridge program called Odyssey, that the Illinois Humanities Council helps run, which is a really great model free education program for adults-- largely working parents participated and the program offered free bus tickets, free childcare. Next semester I'm going to teach at a high school, also a humanities-based program and then I also teach part time at the Art Institute. So I don't really have much to say outside of that but I will explain a little bit more to Adam about the prison project that is almost two years old. We run classes at this prison and part of the reason for running classes is it is like a structure that a prison can understand. But I think it would be really cool to have residencies and other learning structures at the prison as well. Clearly for the people incarcerated getting an education is a real big deal. At the very least, incarcerated students get out of their cell for classes.. and that's actually a hard thing to do in a maximum security prison. On the other level, attending a class is having contact with the outside world and we have contact with the inside. We are trying to foster a relationship that might help us think differently about incarceration. So, that's part of our project but we are working on the nuts and bolts of students getting credit...we're actually going to have a student meeting coming up soon. We have student meetings and I have asked people, "What do you think about credit? Do you want it?" and most people say yes even though as it stands under our current laws, they might not ever leave prison. Most of us in here might know this intellectually but I take credited courses for granted, but it really means so much on the streets. It is a system I think we all kind of have suspicions of because it is full of inequalities to even get access to education. But credit for classes and the legitimacy or 'intellectual capital' it brings for people in prison is really important in our current social

economy.

**FAJEEM MAJEED (FM):** Hey everyone, I'm Fajeem Majeed. I think it is really great to show that sentiment. Great to be here and thank you Daniel for helping work on childcare to be here tonight... Is nice. But no... I guess I have a background as a maker. I've taught at SAIC and Chicago State and now I am at UIC and faculty there and associate director there along with Lisa Lee who was one of the reasons I was working on this free summer school trying to work through that process. But kind of in my practice I guess over the last several years I've been trying to merge... I also rent a space at the Southside Community Art Center and I spend a lot of time trying to merge those two passions together which is basically a space that advocates for a variety of different types of communities and currently at this moment I'm trying to figure out a way to have my cake and eat it too, both of those things. So a lot of my projects are centered around that. This summer I was just doing shacks and asking people to do things in those shacks. It kind of went along the line of a larger impact. I also find it a little overwhelming when we talk about some of the issues with the Chicago and the world. So, I guess I'm looking at the Gary Comer model on a small budget trying to figure out how to impact my immediate community. So, I've been trying to figure out ways to like really impact my neighbors in my neighborhood and thinking that maybe operating really micro might have a more macro approach and recently I've been getting a lot of interesting feedback from my neighbors about the projects that I've been doing. So they are really becoming problematic. So like, meaning there's no perfect solution when you put out this idea oftentimes there are a lot of holes. So I've decided on working with my neighbors to challenge those holes. For example, one of the feedback was that I was being really inclusive of some of my neighbors so I offered for them to help picket my shack along with myself. I am thinking about poking holes in these socially engaged practices and making them very visible. But yeah, I'm excited to be here doing this as a think tank. I'm a big admirer of a lot of your work. Abbie and I talked about it a lot in our class we taught together. It was great too. I'm excited to be here.

**BILLY DEE (BD):** My name is Billy Dee. I guess I don't have any affiliation with an institution aside for my work at a nonprofit (I am currently an assistant coordinator for an overnight emergency homeless shelter in the Lakeview/Boystown area). In terms of the discussion this evening, I think I was invited here because of work I have done over the past few years with Project NIA. In the past 3 or so years, I have collaborated with Project NIA, and particularly with Mariame Kaba (the founder of the organization) to create popular education materials and other visual artwork and materials to support the work of this organization. In 2011 we produced a zine entitled "The P.I.C. Is" for use as a pop-ed material -- the zine has proven to be pretty useful to a large range of groups and individuals- it is not particularly text-heavy and has been used by school groups, community

groups, etc. I have also collaborated with Project NIA on a couple of exhibitions- namely an exhibition called "Black/Inside" which was first installed at the UIC African American Cultural Center which looked at the historical roots of the present day Prison Industrial Complex, and drew on Mariame's remarkable collection of archival photographs and documents. After "Black/Inside" we worked on an exhibition called "Black and Blue" which looked at police violence and resistance to this violence. Artists from all over the city participated, shared personal archives, and really made something quite amazing. An art educator from a local high school got his students involved as well and we were able to show their works. Both exhibitions involved public discussions, tours, workshops... I had the impression that both were meaningful and educational to a lot of different people. I know I learned a great deal myself... I definitely found working on these exhibitions to be very educational and emotionally impactful.

In terms of the topic tonight, one big interest that has developed for me over the past couple of years is the situation faced by young adults who for one reason or another have not been able to complete high school, and are struggling to get a G.E.D, or to return to high school to get that diploma. In my work at the shelter, I have met a lot of young people who are facing huge challenges when it comes to employment because they don't have a high school diploma, and do have criminal record --- in addition to a lot of instability in their day-to day life. Last year I had a chance to attend the Teaching Artist Development Studio, a project hosted by Columbia college, and got really fired up about arts-integrated education. I have been thinking a lot about creating some sort of arts-integrated G.E.D. curriculum. I think about that a lot, but right now my day-job is occupying most of my thoughts- working in that area that is so rife with racial tension has been on the forefront of my mind because so many young people of color use the services of the shelter. It is a really challenging and complicated situation.

**UNKNOWN:** Where is it?

**BD:** It is pretty close to Wrigley field. Ya, definitely a really tense area. The young people who use the services of the shelter face a lot of really flagrant racism from residents of the neighborhood, and a huge amount of profiling by police. So definitely, just navigating work in that environment is taking up a lot of my headspace right now, but I feel really inspired about what people are saying here...Just thinking about producing something that would help give people some kind of credit gets me thinking about how education is so tied to the choices available to people. You know, what is oppression? It is so much about the choices or the lack of choices people have. I just feel like a lot of people are in tough situations where education feels really inaccessible to them, or where they feel super alienated trying to return to high school, for example, if they happen to be older than most of

the students. Or the fact that a lot of really brilliant people who are somehow considered "bad kids" get stuck in really punitive educational environments. I just wonder if there is a more fruitful way to create something that would offer a G.E.D. certificate, but oh so much more...

**EUNYOUNG CHAE (EC):** Hi everyone. I am Eunyoung Chae from South Korea. And my research is about the context of community in contemporary art and I prepared an alternative exchange program about this topic next year in South Korea and I prepare my PHD papers. I'm not perfect in English conversation so I will show some of my research and activities. Sorry for only seven copies if you want to read this please let me know. I am interested in difference and similarities in Korean society and western society on the concept of community. I am a curator and a critic in South Korea contemporary art so I wish to help you or advise your activities to exchange it with South Korea. Thank you.

**UNKNOWN:** What brings you to Chicago?

**EC:** To research how this artistic community in Chicago and curators in contemporary art. I want to compare the Asian and western society.

**MP:** Are you by any chance connected to any of these institutions?

**EC:** No.. This time is just the first time...

**DT:** Yeah, we met recently and got in touch through Never the Same. I mean, I think just stumbling across it online as what happens with web-based resources and so since it was kind of a last minute visit I thought this was a good room to start in and I was quite impressed by Euyoung's critical take on the development of community arts in Korea and there's a lot to go into about that but I sort of thought that was something I wanted to know more about so encourage you all as you have time to set up time to chat or email with Euyoung about that stuff. And she'll probably apply for funding to come back through and doing more exchange work and stuff.

**EM:** Thanks. Yeah, your presence just made me think of a new Korean inspired model of funding. Seriously. Are you guys familiar with the Gei (sp) Club where individual family friends each contribute money to one fund and they redistribute the money back to one person every month. Maybe I need a teach you about the Korean culture.

**DT:** Is this a Korean American thing?

**EM:** I thought it was just a purely Korean thing but I'm a Korean American so I could be completely misled by my mother. Sorry to interrupt. We should do that. I trust you guys.

**CARLA MAYER (CM):** Hi, I'm Carla and I feel like I want to respond to so many things people said. I am connected to a lot of these ideas in many different ways. My day job is I manage arts and cultural programming for the park district here in Chicago city-wide and so what that means in terms of how I am thinking about access for people in communities to both basic arts instruction, on the one hand, but also I'm going to kind of flip the phrase people have been using in terms of socially engaged arts practice, something along the lines, artistically engaged social practice for the youth we connect with in our programs. And so, without really going into a long description about the crazy hierarchy and strange organization of the park district... I work as part of the central administration so what we do is deliver partnerships and resources and some programming to parks all over the city. But parks themselves are part of a different hierarchical structure and within those there are also cultural instructors on staff in those parks and we work side-by-side in terms of professional development with those folks but I don't manage them so I mostly manage the ideas of what should be happening and trying to do it in the most collective way I can. It is strange, I know, the hierarchy. I guess most, maybe, a good example of that is over the last seven or eight years I have developed a program called TRACE, which is an acronym Teens Reimagining Art, Community, and Environment and it is essentially a program that promotes creative activism among the participants and in the summer it looks like an Afterschool Matters Program because the young people get paid to be part of the program and to work but it doesn't look at all like an Afterschool Matters Program in the sense of it being at least in the old Gallery 37 model that was like "I am an artist. I have a sculpture project and you guys come and be my assistants." It doesn't function like that at all. It functions in a much more youth-led where the youth identify issues and concerns of theirs in their neighborhoods and then we bring in as best we can local leaders, teaching artists, other experiences like field trips to broaden over the course of the summer for them to develop projects. So those might be performances, those might be digital media efforts, those might be urban Agri gardening kinds of things or sculpture. We have had a number of different kinds of incarnations. And maybe at some point I want to talk to you about archives... And so the development of that program has sort of brought me into and some folks that I work along has been really thinking about the role of arts in neighborhoods and how young people who are not quite college aged but just about get impacted in terms of a whole range of things that aren't necessarily arts-based but as arts educators we understand in terms of risk-taking and problem solving and in terms of critical thinking and in terms engagement and in terms of bridge building and things like that. So, we are currently trying to write in those, write assessment tools based on those kinds of learning outcomes.. Sorry, I'm in the position where I have to think about these words people use

like, "How are we measuring outcomes?" "I'm not measuring outcomes that you are interested in but let me think about how I might measure the outcomes that we are focused on." We used to be really under the radar, which is both good and bad, but now because there is a cultural plan and a mayor that is interested in some sort of arts stuff but not in any way the kind of arts stuff we are going, there is a brighter light shining what we are doing and it is both good and bad. I'm interested in this conversation in a pre-college way. I feel like there is a lot of college conversation happening but how do we think about arts learning opportunities that are tied to beginning to think about shaping a meaningful life, beginning about morality, beginning to think about people's engagement and connection with each other, even at the 6 through 12 level we are building in these family engagement pieces and it doesn't look like activism at the seven year old level but it is something about that awareness of where we are and what we are doing and how we are contributing, how that ties into something that might end up being something people are thinking about access later on. So it has to do with access and agency for them. In a nutshell. Having said that, on a personal note, I'm going to stop doing what I'm doing very soon. I've almost worked with the park district for almost ten years and before that I taught with CPS and I'm interested in also the possibility of engaging with this group as a prefaces (NSOW) in some way, or put some art practice in my background... I don't do very much of that now. So I am really interested in what might shape up.

**EM:** Can I just say you should franchise the program to every park district in Chicago before you split because they really need them.

**CM:** We will have a business conversation later. I'm really committed to not making a decision about what I am doing next because I want to breathe for a second but then there might be a lot of possibilities. One of which might be to do exactly what I'm doing right now but outside of the district and be a service provider to the district because that could be much more nimble about how that gets done and much less squashed about what doesn't need to happen. So you know you could do that with me.

**DT:** So I already introduced Never the Same but I will just say something briefly that is more biographical. I think a number of you already touched on this point about how many of our sort of non-school projects have a pedagogical dimension to them and I sort of feel like most everything that I've worked on over the last decade plus in Chicago has been trying to create a learning community of some kind and so I'm interested... On some level I just want to keep doing that and make it better and make it evolve and it feels good to check in every once in a while with the other people that are doing that stuff just like push each other a little bit. But I've also been impressed lately by some of the histories of the stuff we are talking about to. I've over several years befriended people who are involved in these Appalachian

communities in Uptown in the sixties and seventies and something I've been struck by and I've been thinking about in the last few days so it is on my mind is the way these independent activist groups basically of people in Uptown who migrated there in the sixties that like what their inner relatedness was with different institutions of higher education. So that like sometimes they were really involved with community initiated people school stuff but then that would fizzle out, sort of remnants of new left type of organizations, that would sort of fizzle out. And then like Northeastern Illinois University would say, "Hey! We have some funds to set up like a satellite project in Uptown!" and they would sort of like turn their free school into that satellite project and appropriate these funds from Northeastern for a little while and then that would fall apart and then they would basically be doing the same work through some nonprofit that they would set up. And so it was sort of those... I have just been interested in following some of those threads of how people have struggled through some of the same things we are talking about in Chicago specifically in history. I'll leave it at that.

So everyone say hi to Adam Bush. Adam is calling us from Providence and Adam will introduce himself and College Unbound in a better way that I can. So let him get started.

**Adam Bush (AB):** Hi guys. Okay. A couple of notes that I have on my screen and I'm just going to read through them so I don't get sidetracked but interrupt me at any point. So there is a lots of ways to go about doing stuff higher in. You guys are all doing that, in your classrooms or outside of your classrooms...

When I was trying to do stuff in the classroom I couldn't make relationships with the students. There are all sorts of issues, right? It is about access to students, there's an 11 percent retention rate for first generation low income students, all kinds of stuff that I was...dealing with instruction as a teacher, I didn't really know how to think about it. And then I came to grad school. More than anything, I think as the emphasis of a historian, oral historian, and so coming from the ethics both of those two things is really thinking about cooperatives and ownership around that. As in I got more involved in advocating as a student.

So, College Unbound is in our fifth year right now. I'm going to talk to you for a couple of seconds just about the history of the program. We started really thinking about rupture for first generation, low-income college students and really sought an alternative college campus. We brought eighteen year olds from all around the country to Providence, Rhode Island where the organization is based, we bought a house, tried to design an alternative resident space, and an alternative curriculum was really based around the students taking on actual projects connected to internship based work in community organizations. I picked

up everyone with a school bus in Los Angeles. We spent a month traveling to everyone's hometown where their first assignment was to design a two-day oral history tour of their hometown or a thing that they were invested in. So it was about a community garden in Los Angeles or historic preservation in Sacramento... Their first college assignment was reading Grace Lee Boggs' autobiography and we stayed at the Boggs Center in Detroit to think together about how where you're from affected the work you do. So a group of ten eighteen year olds showed in Providence in 2009 really with the emphasis to come involved in a city they hadn't been in. And in a lot of ways that was fruitful and wonderful and I romanticize it. In other ways, it was also terrible because eighteen year olds still wanted the traditional college campus in some ways. They felt isolated in the city they didn't yet know. And while we were struggling with that, full time working adults, which didn't go to college, across the street started seeking us out, saying, "That's the college curriculum I want that I'm not getting at CCRI, a community college." And so in our first six months, after this we accepted two adults who worked at my office and our recruitment class for the next year it was five mid-twenty, mid-thirty year olds that moved into the house. And the program began to evolve, not into something that matched students internships, but something that honored their daily life and recognized that as a big difference that should also be credited at least.

So we really involved over our first two years into a program for fulltime working adults to understand and credit work they are doing in the world and work that they want to think about as projects to conceptualize in new ways. And that's the center point of the curriculum. Classes in College Unbound are never just content delivery and then you go do engagement work. It is really thinking about how do you integrate whatever courses you need towards the degree into a cohesive project. So with that they are involved in, invested in the learning and the designing of the syllabi and curriculum that you need to take that act. So that transition happened during our first three years, but also in that third year I started to work closely with Ashe Cultural Art Center in New Orleans. Carol, Ashe's director and I had been thinking about how to really train and professionalize the next generation of leaders for her organization and she had founded the organization fifteen years prior and really wanted to think about how to ensure that the folks that were going to be inheriting it had the skills they needed to grow the organization's capacity in new ways. And so together we started to figure out what kind of college degree model we could center at Ashe. And for us at College Unbound that was an interesting transition, that it wasn't about individual students finding us and it wasn't about going out and manufacturing a cohort, but really finding working with an organization, recognizing their advisory board as the faculty, and helping to design a curriculum that didn't just help individual students create projects but helps organizations build capacity they wanted and needed to do. At the same time, it was accrediting and degree granting for a workhorse of cultural workers, visual artists, educators and activists in the world that had been doing that work for years, but whether for



financial or curricular reasons couldn't stop doing what they were doing to take classes in actions of that. So what they were doing became the center of that curriculum. And Ashe really affected what we were doing in the world and have been doing in Rhode Island for the past two years, where any growth that we do is really about relationship building with the organization that are interested in getting degree granting programs within themselves. We think about the programs that are there in effect and how those programs can be credit bearing activities. The folks that want to advance towards a bachelors degree, we design a holistic bachelors program where nothing is extra-curricular. It is not that, "This is what I'm doing for credit and these are the other sort of things I'm balancing." It is, "You are always at College Unbound a fulltime student and we want to work with you to design a learning plan that honors that. That honors the work you are doing in that way." Now, at the same time we are doing that, getting more and more sure of that curricular model and the students we are working with and how to do it authentically, our relationship with Universities were changing. College Unbound - I don't think I explained this so well at the beginning - we are, in a sense, a degree pathway and we form relationships with universities that say a College Unbound pathway fulfills the requirements of our bachelor or associates degree. We started in 2009 with Roger Williams University. It is a smallish private school here in Rhode Island and in a lot of ways they were the right institution to start with at the time because they were ready for us. So it was like they were ready to jump in and see what happens. And then four years later we were on our third president and their provost and relationships were changing and they no longer saw the work we were doing as fitting and we saw the structure that they were imposing on us as pushing us away from doing the work we wanted to do. And it was the same kind of reasons I wanted to start College Unbound in the first place. It was all that stupid structure stuff around seat-time that when we gathered our students together we weren't doing content-based delivery. it was like a holistic "How are you growing? Your projects, your work... How you are connecting to the things you want to do in life," and that kind of work they couldn't see that as fulfilling their seat-time requirements. So that became a larger battle. And so last year, we left Roger Williams and started to think about a partnership with Charter Oak, which is a public college in Connecticut and it started forty years ago under the initiative under the Association of American University Women. There was a movement in the early seventies where women who had not finished degrees were and had raised families and trying to go back to school were told that their credits expired. So the AAUW appropriately took up arms at that and really pushed for the creation of new institutions of higher learning that would say that credits never expire, that learning was always valid and should be acknowledged and credited in different ways. So C.O., when it started, grew up as a credit banking institution. It didn't have any sort of resume requirements so you could bring in credits from any institution that you've done the learning and they had a small, and so we helped grow it, portfolio assessment, like prior learning assessment, that was there for

students to create portfolios to demonstrate learning and submit to a faculty committee for review to get credit in that way. So in a lot of ways, the population of Charter Oak that has worked with a lot of years, and not just their mission but the ways they structure crediting work, has been an ideal partner for us.

**AB:** Yup. So the way we describe ourselves is College Unbound is a degree pathway that forms a relationship with college and universities that then say this model can fulfill the general education in Bachelor or Associates degree requirements in our school. So, we ourselves, College Unbound does not give credit but College Unbound makes relationships with Universities that recognize what we do and then we are able to give accredited degrees through that.

**SB:** I also have a question Adam. I teach at Antioch right now. We are actually going through the reaccreditation process as we lost our accreditation during the closure.

**SARA BLACK:** The co-op program has consistently been questioned by the accrediting bodies. They are concerned that we are giving college credit for paid work. As a means of giving the program pedagogical teeth, we offer courses called "Work Portfolio courses" where students are expected to reflect throughout the term on their work and life experiences. I'm curious... Does College Unbound run into the same issues? The colleges you are working with are accredited. Are they getting heat for giving credit for life experience and work? Do your students do any form of reflection?

**AB:** It is somewhat of a dance. We talk about it as if we are getting credit for the learning that happens, not the just that you do stuff. So it is how you demonstrate that learning. So reflections are certainly a way to do that but so are evaluations that bosses can give if it is structured that way. So are peer reflections or site visits in that way. We are built around having public exhibitions every 8 weeks. And so students are preparing for those exhibitions that are a central part of what they are getting credit for. Students in our program are always enrolled at least two classes at a time each 8 weeks and each of those classes have built in, in a sense, a workplace lab and how we show that learning is through the public exhibition.

**SB:** And who does the evaluation of that thing?

**AB:** How it works: if I am hired and appointed as the faculty of record through traditional hiring processes, then I can be that course instructor. So I'm the official grader and evaluator for the student body, but very similar to faculty member or professor in a lecture class where there are TAs... I have folks who work on the ground or directly with students in terms of project development work.

**SB:** Interesting. Thank you.

**CP:** I have a question. I am Claire. When you are working with a partner institution...So there is a kind of translation task, right? In terms of...You were just talking about that with the public exhibition and demonstrating that learning took place. If the school that you are partnering with has requirements across some kind of core or fundamental...Do you have to make a case for the learning experience fulfilling a very particular kind of like English Composition or...

**AB:** Yup. We got to do that. In a lot of ways we are degree completion program so students come in various points. And a lot of ones I've taught our student body have had traumatic experiences in the past higher ed, so come in very much not wanting a classroom environment, perhaps having some of those requirements met...I think about the College Unbound program in this way that there is always like four layers. There's the general education requirements of the university we are partnering with, there's the, we talk about life-long learning competencies at College Unbound, so... Collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, etc... There's the requirements that an organization or cohort may have. So if it is the Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans, it wasn't just that that student met the history requirement for the college, it was someone graduating out of this program needs to know the history and reasons of Congo Square and thinking about that cultural practice and history of that space. And the student, with a project they've outlined will have very particular goals they need to accomplish through this program of study. And so there's a relationship between those layers of that top one of the university and the other one of the cohort and the student themselves have things they want to accomplish out of this program. So it is about being very explicit about that and helping them frame that in a way, so as they are co-creating those syllabus and curating their semester that they are laying out their goals for it. So then College Unbound in some ways helps them translate between those four layers. We will design a class that fulfills the English Comp 2 requirement, but in that class it is not taught like a traditional seat-time class, and we do it entirely through the student's project. So, I do care about writing but I want them to be writing about things they care about and not have arbitrary assignments, but have things that they are designing that are of use.

**DT:** Adam, one of the sort of interests of the gathering initially for me was also to think about...Some of us are doing really informal education that has no aspiration towards credit-granting, while we also work at institutions that are entirely oriented around selling credits essentially and selling credentials. And then we've also got folks like Sara that are doing work inside prisons, and there's a number of other prison related arts and education projects in town that weren't able to make it today. But I guess something that I was sort of interested in you speaking to would be for you to sort of lay out a kind of hypothetical

scenario where a community of people that are involved in various other kinds of educational projects in communities, in universities, in prisons, etc. What would it look like or could it even be done if there was a some kind of coordination of those activities that could engage in your structure to the extent that maybe we could keep doing all the things we are doing in the ways we are doing them but also add on the possibility that maybe a credit could be given were that desirable...Kind of as a way to address the fact that sometimes people are really doing this stuff out of a need that is more existential and sometimes they are doing it out of a need to get credentials and develop in that way. So could you speak to how that kind of coordination could work and also a little bit about how...Something that was very intriguing when you presented this to me was the kind of specifics of the finances where people basically pay, as I understand it, for a transcript but not necessarily for a course.

**AB:** That was the one point I didn't get to when we switched between phones and to me it was one of the most exciting parts of this move to a partnership with Charter Oak. When Charter Oak started, one of the powers they were given by the board of Regents was to be able to accredit community based learning. The structure was designed in a way for organizations like the Carpenters Union, who does trainings and wanted to have a certificate of completion of those trainings count for credit. Most colleges do this already for certain things. So anyone going through basic training for the police academy, their certificate saying that did that counts for credit at most universities. For me, seeing the ability to work with that is the most kind of radical and exciting thing I've come across in higher ed for a long time. So what we did for College Unbound, first off, sort of playing with this idea, I wrote up a dozen syllabi and submitted them to a faculty review process and formatted them in the way that they needed and I submitted it and right now I can decide to teach any of those syllabi... I could teach at Charter Oak and it could cost money to use federal aid to enroll in those courses, I could teach them at Prov. College or Brown and open up those classrooms so it is not just Providence or Brown students but anyone I want to invite into that space and be able to give them credit for participating in that class. I could teach them in an incarceration facility, completely free of charge for students who can't qualify for Pell Grants, or I could work a community based organization and think about it as a revenue generator for that organization and teach it so folks that are paying the organization to participate in a workshop. And I'm really excited to have talked to Charter Oak about is the expansion of the use of that infrastructure. It is called CCAP in abbreviation, Connecticut Credit Assessment Program. And so, I see it when I was leaving a network for graduate students, I want to help graduate students who may not be interested in going to tenure track positions, who do want to be teaching in some way, to submit things they've designed and they can teach them however they want to earn a living or free. I started working with after school arts organizations to think about their training of

their mentors in those organizations, that the training can be credit bearing activities. I'm working with other organizations in providence that have lecture series and how to frame that lecture series as a course that some sort of, if someone wants to participate in it, some sort of product that a participant is creating that can be assessed. This already happens through ACE—the American Council on Education and there's a larger move for course-based accreditation happening on a federal level. But it's tremendously exciting.

**SR:** So Charter Oak is the college that has facilitated the ability to give credits through the CCAP program?

**AB:** Yes.

**SR:** But that is not universal. It is just that specific college does it?

**AB:** Actually, that college does it for the Board of Regions for Connecticut. So they are the college that administers that program for Connecticut State.

**LP:** Just for further clarification, when you say once the syllabus is approved, who is approving it?

**AB:** So the process that happens is I help Charter Oak put together a team of faculty that review the materials, they provide recommendations, and look through in terms of what is the product or are the outcomes clear and how is that being assessed, they give a credit recommendation and Charter Oak honors that credit recommendation. Then, any time that that course material is taught, if it has been taught in the past two years or for the next five years it is approved every five years.

**DT:** So just a quick check in since we have gone through these different phases of the meeting. I want to let people ask a few more clarifying questions to Adam and have this focus thing, but maybe at 7:30 then we can stop that in a few minutes and open it up more generally so people can respond to each other's introductions and then Adam we will just keep you on in the conversation. Is that okay?

**AB:** Its an infrastructure that really excites me. You can certainly see their introduction to the CCAP process on their website. You can also read about College Unbound. I can also send this room sort of drafts of things we are drawing up together that is not at a website stage.

**DT:** Some of the interests were that they were at a transitional point where certain new

possibilities were opening up so it seemed worth throwing out to you guys.

**SR:** Just curious, do you know of any other models like this in the U.S. or other states doing this or do you think it is just unique to Connecticut?

**AB:** First, Charter Oak does this process not just for you have to be based in Connecticut. So I can get Rhode Islands things approved for this, and I have New Orleans things approved for this, and there are actually Kibbutz in Israel that submit work that they do to be credited by Charter Oak. So it is administered through Connecticut. The example that I know that happens all the time is things like military training, that those are preapproved. Most schools of continuing studies have some sort of process, but it is not normally public, Charter Oak talks about it as part of their work, and certainly not used to this capacity.

**SR:** One just quick follow up question is, "Does someone have to have a GED to get a college credit?"

**AB:** Not to get a college credit but to matriculate at a university.

**SARAH ROSS:** Okay, thanks.

**CP:** How many faculty do you actually have?

**AB:** So, we have a staff of about ten at College Unbound. There's three or four of us that submit our CVs to the university for the potential to get hired as professors of record for courses but then we work with folks who may not have master's degrees to work with the students on the ground.

**CP:** I'm still not clear where the money comes from.

**AB:** Sure. So for College Unbound as a degree program, students enroll at Charter Oak and take College Unbound designed classes. So they are qualified for federal financial aid. We are a cheap enough program that no one goes out of pocket and really trying to be as close to the Pell Grant amount as we can each year, and that's for our full time enrolled program. And so federal aid goes to Charter Oak and then as a faculty member teaching a class, I pay and I'm able to get additional money from Charter Oak to pay our on the ground student support. For the CCAP process, the only times when there is any money associated with it is money that I got to get to Charter Oak to do the review to put together the faculty team to do this assessment process, and then there's a processing fee. Any other money is up to any instructor as they teach it if they want to charge.

**EM:** Do instructors charge?

**AB:** I don't know any examples of individuals that have gone through the CCAP process. At Charter Oak it has been used primarily for businesses who have professional development training programs that do it. So that's built into it. With my 12 syllabi that I got approved earlier this year, I've been teaching them for free to students who need additional credits and supervise independent studies with them. I'm working with the Ashe Cultural Arts Center a number of classes, some of which built into the programs that they have...So, they have a health and wellness luncheon series... So starting to think about that as a syllabus so that anyone participating in the year of lectures can earn three credits in doing so as well as they want to design a cultural responses to disaster in New Orleans course so that folks that do emergency management work could take and they would be able to chart something as a revenue stream for that organization.

**MP:** I don't know if this was part of your question Claire... Adam, it seems that some start-up capital was needed to buy the house, for example, or just to get things started. And for those parts of the project that aren't covered, such as paying the faculty at Charter Oaks for supervising the whole process of creating syllabi, where does that money come from? Does your organization have to raise money independently too?

**AB:** So it is almost two separate pieces of a presentation that I chunkily gave. One of them was the history of College Unbound, and College Unbound was started in a partnership with the founder of Big Picture Learning- a network of alternative high schools. And so that nonprofit organization houses College Unbound and so the eighteen year olds that started our program came from that network of alternative high schools. And so we were at that point working with foundations. So Lumina funded some planning grant kind of stuff. That was really only in the first two years when we were working with traditional aged students. Any funding that helps College Unbound only comes out of money through Charter Oak or through Roger Williams or through any other university partner. So it is all tuition driven in that way. So students who enroll in classes, that tuition gets...I get hired as a faculty member. And so the money goes through the university in that way. This CCAP process, which is the other piece of it, the only money that is associated with CCAP is money at the beginning to have classes approved for credit and money at the end that is a processing fee that a student pays if they want it on a transcript. The other piece of that is if a student has done any of the CCAP classes, and then they enroll in College Unbound Charter Oak, they don't have to pay any of those processing fees. So, if a student collects 9 credits through CCAP things that we put together throughout Chicago, and then wants to 30 credits through Charter Oak, they only have to pay the one hundred and fifty or two hundred

dollars for each class to get it on the transcript.

**DT:** One of my interests when I was talking to Adam about this is it seemed like a unique kind of structure. As I was considering the range of people in this room, thinking about well...Some of us organize lecture series, some of us do classes in prisons or in at organizations, and those kinds of things a lot of time do not need to have credit attached to them and they sort of benefit from their autonomy and specificity in the way they are organized. So creating some bit mega-organization is not the solution to better coordinating our efforts necessarily because it would probably stifle us, but that this was sort of a framework we could all do the things we do, give a syllabus to Adam to have processed through this framework, and then it would be a sort of added option that people could do something at any of these number of places for credit if they wanted to, which in my opinion would open up this possibility of...I mean, people sort of talked a lot about access and equity and things like that. It would just add another layer two the motivations that people might bring to wanting to participate in this stuff and kind of provide a form of coordination across a network that wouldn't in anyway stifle all the individuals' specific projects that everyone is engaged in. So just a thought. But maybe people have responses to that or more generally responses to each other.

**SR:** Is that possible Adam? Say, someone here in Chicago wanted to organize a class and run it through the system that you have worked so hard to put together to make credit available, is that a possibility?

**AB:** Yeah, absolutely. That was the exciting part of Dan and I brainstorming together. It is a hundred percent yes. Charter Oak is concerned about two things in this assessment process. One, that there is clear learning outcomes and two that there's real ways to assess whether those outcomes were achieved. My vision for Providence that anyone participating in the civic life of the city, taking part in creative practice throughout the city can also earn credit through doing that work—but you have to create syllabi that reflect those learning outcomes authentically. But what it does is open up possibilities that there are other ways to get that degree through means that aren't just sitting in the classroom.

**SR:** I was going to say Adam, the classes that you already have approved are those classes that sound like other people can teach. Is that correct?

**AB:** Yup. Right now College Unbound is approved to be doing instruction in Rhode Island and in Louisiana, but I'm happy to send you guys all those syllabi. Because I was learning about this process... They were designed as things that fill some of the general education requirements by the university. So there's like an expository writing class that's there. So,



that someone can run a free expository class for people to get those credits. And then there are some fun ones about storytelling and oral history. There's ones about youth arts organizations. There's all kinds of things to play with in there.

**LP:** I have a question. When you were first describing the CCAP structure you said faculty could teach these syllabi for free in prison, at Charter Oak, but also at RISD or Brown. Why would someone want to teach them at RISD or Brown? How does that work?

**AB:** So the way I meant that...One of my frustrations when I teach in a classroom in a university is... I always push to make sure that classroom feels very open and inclusive. So if I am teaching, let's say at Providence College, I will teach a class that has a dozen Providence College students in it but also has high school students from around the corner and other folks that are interested in learning the things that we are doing and those aren't necessarily people who are paying Providence College to be in that class but the people that absolutely help the larger class and are doing the work... I want ways to give them credit for that! It shouldn't just be the students that are paying Providence College and are matriculating students there. So, that, I can do that, which to me, makes it much more comfortable being in those spaces. We talk about reciprocity all the time. It is not really reciprocity unless the credit is shared as well in that way.

**MP:** There's another layer to thinking about how your work with College Unbound can perhaps serve as a conduit for the kinds of things we have been talking about, and also provide a model for how we can think about building relationships with institutions here. For example, one of the things that has come up for some people at the table is the question of finding institutional partners. We've been trying to challenge the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to have more than a symbolic relationship to prison education. There's a need to find an institution that would be the equivalent of Marymount Manhattan College which provides accreditation to the college program at Bedford Hills Prison in New York State.

Several people brought up the question of GED vs. "higher education" and the huge problematic void between them. In Chicago we used to have a very vibrant alternative schools network. I think it still exists... Don Pedro Albizu Campos high school is still part of that network, but a lot of other schools have closed. Billy brought up the idea of "pushouts" as opposed to dropouts—kids who failed in every other system. Many of the alternative network schools don't exist anymore, but they modeled great education for anybody of any age in any community, way more than the schools that those kids had been pushed out of. All of this is making me think, what is the potential we have in this city that is not tapped into the Art Institute?

**EM:** You guys have to convince your administrators and board members at SAIC to make this a possibility.

**SR:** Another thing... I think what I'm understanding Mary's asking... do we need to build something that looks like what they have there or can you use that?

**MP:** Well, probably both. There are certain specifics that we need to examine and learn from what Adam has built.

**EM** I have one big question. You mentioned the tuition is paid for through an application to get the federal funds or Pell Grant, I have not been in school in forever guys and I have no idea what tuition really costs... but we also say the people who can't afford to pay the tuition are also allowed to attend these classes at these other universities and not have to pay tuition? AND still get credit? Is that what I heard?

**MP:** What Adam said and Daniel said before is that there's a kind of minimal processing fee...

**EM:** So to get that credit... You can't just get that transferred to whatever?

**MP:** And he was also saying that the level of tuition at the Connecticut school is affordable enough and that both fulltime and part-time students are eligible for federal grants...

**EM:** What is left of the Pell pays for that typically.

**MP:** Yeah, that's what I thought he said.

**DT:** But not everyone has to... That is if you are a full time student, then you become enrolled this program in Connecticut through College Unbound but if you just wanted to take a weekly seminar as Co-Prosperity Sphere on Chicago Art History and then reserve the right to make a credit, you could if the syllabus had been vetted through this system you could then, after it was over, you could through this process you could get that credit through the price of a transcript essentially.

**DT:** The syllabus is like the conduit to them so essentially... For the purpose of taking the class at Co-Prosperity Sphere, it could be like Ed is the teacher but then for the purpose of getting credit for it, Adam is the teacher of record at that school. So it is like a layering thing.

**EM:** You can only credits through Connecticut, through Charter.

**DT:** Yeah, but if I just wanted to participate and not get credit, which would be my situation, like I wouldn't want to do it for credit, then I could still do it

**EM:** Pretty incredible. Truly beautiful system. A few things though... For it to have an impact here in Chicago would require a durable network of universities, you would probably want to submit your syllabi or similar syllabi to what you are already teaching at your institutions to Adam to provide this dual course thing or something similar. What I'm saying, it is more work for the instructors to set up this thing to provide all these options. The most beautiful thing would be like, what kind of degree program would you all assemble together to create this uber degree to people who want this kind of education that you want to give them. That would be the most fun thing to figure out I think. But it seems like there is a system in place to allow us to already and I think you should definitely figure out a way to pursue this because this is mind-blowing that we can use the Connecticut Charter School as a way to provide credit to those kids who may or may not be able to pay for credit at these institutions.

**SR:** But it also sounds like, Adam pardon me if I'm wrong, no one is matriculating from College Unbound, they are going to matriculate from another school and you've built relationships with such as schools in your community, your region, that will accept that credit...

**LP:** Just one though right? Just Charter Oak?

**AB:** Charter Oak and then Southern New Hampshire University is the other one.

**SR:** So somebody goes and gets twenty credits from College Unbound and then they can transfer them to those colleges to matriculate. Is that correct?

**AB:** Yeah but our students aren't looking to matriculate by taking standard classes.

**EM:** Is that where most of your students are coming from?

**AB:** Yeah but really we have gone back and forth about whether our plan is to form a consortium of college universities or to focus and grow with Charter Oak and I don't know...I think that maybe there are things that Charter Oak doesn't do that we want to do so they don't offer a teacher certification, and we have a whole network of teacher's aids that want

to do the College Unbound Program so we may be forming a relationship with another school in the region because of that. One of the things that Roger Williams didn't do that there was a need for was early childhood education and so now we can offer early childhood education through Charter Oak.

**MP:** Do you have to partner with New England colleges and universities?

**AB:** No, by no means. It was interesting... When I started working closely with Ashe with this in New Orleans, my initial thing was how cool now will work with Julane or work with Xavier we will do something there and we will start to grow this network! It was really Carol and the student body that talked about negative past relationships they had had with those institutions and the prestige that they felt came with the New England institution...They pushed that against what I had gone thinking and really wanted the relationship with Roger Williams University.

**AR:** I have a question whether people use these credits to matriculate at other institutions. Like, I'm thinking about friends that I've known that haven't been able to afford to go to the Art Institute, take courses outside of the school, and then I think you have to take like the last two courses or something back at the Art Institute...I don't know how that works, if these credits are accepted widely elsewhere I guess is the question. Or if anyone who was teaching at the school went to school would know how easy to get these things transferred for people who can't afford to stay in school who started and want to finish up... or want to do alternative programming in education.

**AB:** So Charter Oak credits will transfer to any of those schools so anything gone through CCAP goes on to the Charter Oak transcript and then can be brought over.

**MP:** I don't think anything is easy about these institutions. So many of them, like the School of the Art Institute, are now imagining all these low residency programs...

**LP:** (eyebrows raised) Imagining?

**MP:** Well, some of them are imagining. (laughs) SAIC is starting to talk about MOOCs—Massive Open Online Courses. In a way they have to talk about them, because MOOCs are part of what's shaping the direction of education now. But this is the absolute epicenter what we are talking about.

**SB:** Around offering credit?

**MP:** Yeah, the issue of potentially offering course credit for prisoners taking classes in relationship to PNAP...

**DT:** But the fact that there's such prevalence of online education, distance learning, kinds of things going on...I feel like in a way, makes this a unique moment. For instance, I sent out that transcript of a discussion we had in 2007, the How We Learn thing that AREA organized, and it was like...not unlike all the things we are talking about tonight except I think the sense that there could be more of an organized response to it seems more possible now. Rather than it being sort of a like... We are people who are trying to continue to develop ourselves as adults and human beings outside of universities and we are going to be in these reading and writing groups on the fringe and then...but then everyone still has to work two jobs because they are doing that and also working at a university... That never felt like it could be resolved at that moment whereas this moment feels like there is a little more possibility that there could actually be a counter institutional type of response.

**LP:** But Mary, you were saying, the online stuff is the precise opposite because it is all about making as much money as possible from people. And so, I'm thinking...What if we were to do a CCAP program with an Art Institute class and the students at the Art Institute who paying 45,000 dollars are there with people who are just paying \$200 for the transcript and they are going to be fucking pissed off. And I think that also...the low residency program is already pissing some people off who are doing the traditional MFA, even though the low residency program is costing the same amount of money... It is like, "Oh, but I wouldn't have to be here all year..." So there's a revolution in the ways in which the system messed stuff up, too.

**DT:** But to be able to direct that crisis that it creates, like to be a part of creating the crisis and orienting it rather than just letting it sort of happen...

**MP:** I don't think there's any way we can direct it.

**DT:** I don't mean direct it in your specific institution....

**BD:** Direct one little effort

**EM:** ...Build a new field of counseling, student counseling developed with this model. It is going to be a new industry.

**DT:** Career coach you out of your career.

**EM:** How can I minimize my tuition at SAIC?... it is going to be pretty interesting.

**CM :** So we should just keep talking about this. What I imagine the pool or demographic for the students who are pursuing a lot of what started in Providence or New Orleans doesn't feel to me like the same group as the students at the School of the Art Institute...