

Editor's Note

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I created this cover based on an idea from Kitty Jo Cox. I recall sitting together in the African American and Diaspora Studies lounge, waiting before our class on Black Education, when Kitty Jo raised her hand and made the anchor-down symbol over her mouth, fingers spread downward, palm facing in, covering her lips. Her eyes lit up. "I have an idea," she said. That gesture, the anchor-down symbol used in place of the pointed index finger that so often signals silence, became the heart of the cover's art. It stands as a response to the silencing that frequently occurs in discourse around the question of Blackness in higher education.

I chose the collage medium because it embodies a fitting metaphor for the student body of Vanderbilt — different people arriving from different places, brought together to create something new and whole.

The title "Shattered Mosaic" is a double entendre, reflecting intersecting elements that together shape the experience of Blackness in higher education. First, Mosaic, a student organization that partnered with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to support cultural and ethnic diversity in the admissions process was abolished, this school year due to the current government's anti-DEI initiatives, highlighting the tangible consequences of dismantling inclusion efforts. But the phrase resonated with me for a deeper reason too: isn't a mosaic already shattered? It may seem redundant, since a mosaic is already purposely composed of fragmented pieces. Yet I use "shattered" to emphasize something further, that the education system itself can be understood not only as fragmented, but as intentionally and structurally broken in ways that produce and sustain that fragmentation. Sadly, the system of schooling is not broken. Rather, it is doing exactly what it was designed to do: create racially disparate outcomes. Similarly, a mosaic is not broken; it is doing precisely what it was meant to do.