Greetings. Welcome to the Spring 2016 African American Studies Program newsletter. We have had a busy and exciting semester and have not only co-sponsored and sponsored programs, but have also celebrated the accomplishments of our faculty and students.

I want to begin by telling you about our sponsored activities. In January, we sponsored by film, Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights, as part of the celebration week for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In February, we sponsored a two-day symposium on the Obama administration.

With the generous assistance of the Yavitz Fund from the Center for the Humanities and Public Sphere, we invited Professor Michael Jeffries of Wellesley College and Professor Frederick Harris of Columbia University to discuss their research on President Obama. This symposium was also co-sponsored by the Bob Graham Center for Public Service. We also co-sponsored lectures by Professor and Poet Nikki Giovanni, Professor Patricia Hill-Colling, and Professor and Author Gilbert King.

I also had the pleasure of teaching my African Americans in Paris class this semester. I have taught this class three times and had the pleasure of escorting 14 students to France for a week. We toured several historical sites in and around the city that pertained to African Americans.

Our faculty have had numerous accomplishments this year. These include the publication of Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Professor Ibram Kendi. This is his second book. He is also the author of The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972 and is working on his third book, Black Apple: A History of Malcolm X in New York, 1954-1974, that examines the legacy of Malcolm X. Professor Evan Hart has received two grants to complete her manuscript entitled Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America.

Dr. Sharon Austin, Director of the African American Studies Program and Associate Professor of Political Science

Building an Inclusive Movement: Feminism, Health, and the National Black Women’s Health Project. Professor Lauren Pearlman is also continuing to work on her book manuscript that examines the history, politics, and civil rights movement in Washington, D.C. Democracy’s Capital: Local Protest, National Politics, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C. is under contract with the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Press. Dr. Vincent Adejumo has also submitted a proposal to SUNY Press for his book research, For-Profit Colleges and Universities: Big Money Influencing Government, that examines the impact of for-profit colleges. I have received a contract from SUNY Press for my third book, The Caribbeanization of Black Politics: Race, Group Consciousness, and Political Participation in America.

Several of our graduates are going to law, graduate, or medical school. Others are going into the workforce. Our internship program has benefited several students and allowed them to explore various career options. We are also preparing a proposal to offer a combined Bachelor’s/Master’s degree in African American Studies that can be completed in five years. All in all, it has been a successful semester, and we look forward to serving our students in the years to come.
Dr. Ibram Kendi [EEE-brum] Xolani [ZO-LAA-NEE] Kendi [KEN-DEE] attained his bachelor's degree from Florida A&M University where he studied Journalism and African American Studies. While working as a journalist on the field, he was interested in writing about issues that affected the African American community. It wasn’t until he arrived at Temple University that he saw the potential for being a professor and writing about African American issues in a more substantive way. Dr. Kendi earned his doctoral degree in African American Studies from Temple University in 2010. He continues his work as an assistant professor of contemporary African American history at the University of Florida (UF). Dr. Kendi decided to become an African American Studies professor for a combination of reasons. The foremost reason was because he wanted to have the opportunity to learn, teach, and write about the experience of people of African descent. Dr. Kendi was interested in analyzing the effects of racism and racial discrimination on peoples and nations. Another reason he wanted to become an African American Studies professor is because of the history and mission of African American Studies. One of the features that makes African American Studies distinct from most other disciplines is the tradition of protest, student activism, and the black power movement upon which it is founded. Because of this tradition, African American Studies embodies a socially responsible ethos that strives to undermine, rather than maintain, the legacy of racism and oppression of people of African descent within the historical context of the US.

Dr. Kendi was excited to become part of this tradition. Stamped from the Beginning, Dr. Kendi’s second book, is a work that arose out of a project that had its origin in African American Studies. He wrote the book because as he continued leaning, reading, and writing, he saw gaps in the literature and realized that a book that chronicled the history of racist ideas had never been written before. In essence, Stamped from the Beginning is a work that traces the roots of racist ideas in American society from their origin to the present day. Contrary to the belief that we live in a post-racial society, in this work Dr. Kendi documents how racist thought has continued albeit in different, more subtle, and sophisticated forms. One of the key ideas that Dr. Kendi examines in this work is that of scientific racism, or the ways in which science has been used as a means to establish racist ideas in American life. For instance, although biological racism was an idea that was discounted in the 1960’s, racism has continued through assimilationist, segregationist, and anti-racist ideational forms.

Through his work Dr. Kendi seeks to provide the tools necessary to counter the influence of these anti-Black racist ideas and their continued influence over American ways of life. This is why, as the student founders of the 1960’s black power movements came to realize, African American Studies programs are so vitally important. According to Dr. Kendi, African American Studies programs are important because they allow students to learn about topics and issues that have not traditionally been taught. The knowledge derived therefrom can be extraordinarily useful in whichever professional endeavor one chooses to take part. Whether a major or minor, students can market themselves as having knowledge about the complex racial issues and ideas that have had a profound impact on American ways of life. In a society which is increasingly more diverse, having the capacity to navigate through complex social interactions is a valuable asset to have. According to Dr. Kendi, African American Studies programs are important because they allow students to learn about topics and issues that have not traditionally been taught. The knowledge derived therefrom can be extraordinarily useful in whichever professional endeavor one chooses to take part. Whether a major or minor, students can market themselves as having knowledge about the complex racial issues and ideas that have had a profound impact on American ways of life. In a society which is increasingly more diverse, having the capacity to navigate through complex social interactions is a valuable asset to have.
Alumni Spotlight– Breanne Palmer

Ms. Breanne Palmer will receive a Juris Doctor degree from the Georgetown University School of Law on May 23, 2016. While enrolled there, Breanne was the Development & Diversity Editor for *The Georgetown Law Journal*. She earned a minor in African American Studies and a major in Political Science from the University of Florida in May 2013. She was also a member of the Umoja Initiative that assisted the program with the proposal for the African American Studies major which went into effect during the fall 2013 semester.

President Barack Obama Symposium

In February 2016, the African American Studies Program sponsored a two-day symposium on the Presidency of Barack Hussein Obama. On Wednesday February 17th, Dr. Michael Jeffries of Wellesley College gave a presentation from his book *Paint the White House Black: Barack Obama and the Meaning of Race in America*. He discussed the chapter that dealt with Michele Obama as Superwoman. Dr. Fredrick Harris delivered the Dr. Ronald C. Foreman Jr. lecture on Thursday February 18th. He discussed his book *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Fall of Black Politics*.
During the 2016 spring break in March, Dr. Sharon Austin accompanied 14 students to Paris for the African Americans in Paris class. The students watched online lectures, read materials, completed papers and an exam before traveling to France. While there, they listened to lectures and visited several historic sites of significance to African American ex-patriates who fled the U.S. and lived in France to escape American discrimination and injustices. The students visited the suburban home of the late entertainer Josephine Baker, Versailles Palace, and the Louvre Museum. They also took a cruise of the River Seine and visited the Eiffel Tower as well as several of the cities’ neighborhoods such as Montmartre and Goutte D’Or. Many visited Amsterdam, Barcelona, London, Nice, and Rome on their free day. The course will be offered every year during spring break. For more information, visit our website (http://afam.clas.ufl.edu), YouTube page (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1Ouw7_kl2wOadwYwf-KzVA/videos), or contact Dr. Austin at polssdw@ufl.edu.
Some Americans cling desperately to the myth that we are living in a post-racial society, that the election of the first Black president spelled the doom of racism. In fact, racist thought is alive and well in America - more sophisticated and more insidious than ever. And as award-winning historian Ibram X. Kendi argues in Stamped from the Beginning, if we have any hope of grappling with this stark reality, we must first understand how racist ideas were developed, disseminated, and enshrined in American society.

In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. Stamped from the Beginning uses the life stories of five major American intellectuals to offer a window into the contentious debates between assimilationists and segregationists and between racists and antiracists. From Puritan minister Cotton Mather to Thomas Jefferson, from fiery abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison to brilliant scholar W.E.B. Du Bois to legendary anti-prison activist Angela Davis, Kendi shows how and why some of our leading proslavery and pro-civil rights thinkers have challenged or helped cement racist ideas in America.

Contrary to popular conceptions, racist ideas did not arise from ignorance or hatred. Instead, they were devised and honed by some of the most brilliant minds of each era. These intellectuals used their brilliance to justify and rationalize deeply entrenched discriminatory policies and the nation’s racial disparities in everything from wealth to health. And while racist ideas are easily produced and easily consumed, they can also be discredited. In shedding much-needed light on the murky history of racist ideas, Stamped from the Beginning offers us the tools we need to expose them—and in the process, gives us reason to hope. Source: ibram.org
Ms. Kaya Bryant will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies and Zoology in May 2016. She will then pursue a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Tuskegee University in Alabama. Way to go Kaya!

Ms. Yazmeane Watson will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies and Criminology in May 2016. She interned for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation during the fall of 2015 and will now begin an internship with the White House after graduation.

Mr. Tyrin Chenault will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies. He has accepted a teaching position in Brooklyn, New York with Success Academy Charter Schools.

Ms. Dejhon Fairure will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies and Psychology in May 2016. She will begin law school at the Levin School of Law at the university of Florida this fall.
The African American Studies Program is proud to present the awards below to three of our May graduates.

**Ravenne Aponte**

Ms. Ravenne Aponte received the Dr. Faye V. Harrison Award for Best Honor’s Thesis. She is an African American Studies major and has a double minor in Health Disparities and Educational Studies.

**Kaylis Baxter**

Ms. Kaylis Baxter received the Director’s Award for the Highest Grade Point Average in African American Studies Courses. She has a double major in African American Studies and Sociology.

**Azaari Mason**

Mr. Azaari Mason received the Dr. Barbara McDade-Gordon Award for Campus and Community Service. He has a double major in African American Studies and Political Science.
Congratulations Class of 2016!

The students in the African American Studies Integrative Seminar II presented their research findings on Thursday April 14, 2014. The students below will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies or a minor in African American Studies in the May and August 2016 graduation ceremonies. We congratulate each of them.

Ravenne Aponte, African American Studies
Carla Batchelor, African American Studies
Kaylis Baxter, African American Studies and Sociology
T’Keyah Brooks, African American Studies
Kaya Bryant, African American Studies and Zoology
Tyrin Chenault, African American Studies
Courtney Coleman, African American Studies minor and English Major
Candice Davis, African American Studies minor and English Major
Keandra Davis, African American Studies
Lua Davis, African American Studies minor and Psychology Major
Nasseeka Denis, African American Studies and Anthropology
Attalee Dixon, African American Studies
Dejhon Fairure, African American Studies and Psychology
Berta Gonzalez, African American Studies and English
Rik’ki Jackson, African American Studies
Ashley Jolicoeur, African American Studies
Brittany Jolivette, African American Studies
S. Azaari Mason, African American Studies and Political Science
Ianthea Mobley, African American Studies and Interior Design
Amanda Nelson, African American Studies and Political Science
Jeremi Powell, African American Studies
Taylor Sharper, African American Studies and Political Science
Riunshay Washington, African American Studies
Yazmeane Watson, African American Studies and Criminology
Staci White, African American Studies minor and English Major
A crowd of about 30 students, university faculty and Black Affairs ambassadors stood shoulder to shoulder and lined the walls of the Institute of Black Culture on Friday. This day marks the 45-year anniversary of “Black Thursday.” In April 1971, a group of black students presented a list of demands to the University of Florida administration, asking for a support system for black students on campus. Once these students were denied their demands, they organized a protest on the steps of Tigert Hall, outside of the university president’s office.

Sixty-seven students were arrested on that day and were later denied amnesty for their actions. Over the next few days, more than 100 black students and supporters decided to withdraw from the university. It was after the actions of the student body that the administration created the Institute of Black Culture (IBC).

“Would you be willing to withdraw if it came down to it?” university professor Vincent Adejumo fervently asked the crowd. Adejumo teaches African American studies at UF, which he said is the university’s fastest growing major. During his speech he encouraged the crowd to be selfless as they advocate for more campus inclusion.

Susan Ajayi, a UF Multicultural and Diversity Affairs ambassador, also addressed the crowd. She emphasized the importance the IBC has had for the student body all these years. “It’s a place to study, a place to microwave your food, feel included and relax,” she said. “It was established as a home away from home.”

Latosha Jackson, a UF student and ambassador for Black Affairs, expressed gratitude for the students who protested on Black Thursday. “If it wasn’t for them, we wouldn’t even be here right now. If it wasn’t for them being selfless and just putting their all into it, making sure that they have their demands met, there wouldn’t be a black UF — period,” she said.

In his speech Adejumo also emphasized the needs that the community and the university still have even after 45 years. In 1971, 2 percent of the university’s student body was black, but today, just 6 percent of the student’s are black, according to Adejumo. The crowd clapped and nodded their heads in agreement as he called for the university to aggressively recruit a more diverse faculty and student body.

“Little things like that make the students feel welcome,” he said. “UF is a great place, but when you feel good, you learn better.” Source: wuft.org
Support the African American Studies Program

The African American Studies Program at the University of Florida depends upon gifts from alumni and friends to fund student and faculty travel, research, and lecture series. If you would like to support the program, please consider making your gift today. The University of Florida Foundation, Inc. is the steward of all private support of the University of Florida.

You can give online to The African American Studies Program Fund which makes it possible for the program to engage in extracurricular activities that promote community building and public programming. Private sources of funding increase our capacity for creating a supportive environment for interactions among students, faculty, and the wider community. Designate African American Studies account F008477.

One way to offer a specific contribution is to support the Harry Shaw Travel Fund which will make it possible for students to travel for research and conference presentations. Designate African American Studies and list F016689 to build this account. The James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship Endowment Fund honors the memory of the late James Haskins (1941-2005), a former University of Florida Professor of English and a distinguished writer who interpreted the African American experience.

In well over 100 books, he exposed children and youth readers to the biographies of leading African Americans and key aspects of Black culture, social history, and contemporary life. The scope of his writings also extended beyond Black America to other parts of the world.

The James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship Endowment Fund provides the critical resources needed to enable African American Studies to host emerging and established scholars with research interests that complement some aspect of the scholarly agenda of faculty within the program. The African American Studies account code to build this fund is F013759/013760.

You may also make a gift of cash, appreciated stocks and bonds, real estate, and through various planned giving opportunities through the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences Development and Alumni Affairs office. For more information, please contact Christy Popwell, Director of Development and Alumni Affairs 352-294-1964 or cpopwell@ufl.edu. Thank you for supporting our stability and growth!
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