

## PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

### TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL:

Reorganization of the African American Studies & Research Program to Department of African American Studies

### SPONSOR:

African American Studies & Research Program

#### Contact:

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### COLLEGE SPONSOR:

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### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The reorganization reflects our operation as an autonomous academic unit.

### JUSTIFICATION:

The African American Studies & Research Program began in 1969 as the Academic Committee of the Committee on Afro-American Concerns. In 1974, it became the Afro-American Studies & Research Program and in 2004 acquired its current nomenclature. Over the past six years the AASRP has experienced remarkable development in terms of faculty, course offerings, student enrollment and national status. Presently, it is larger than most African American and ethnic studies departments or programs in the state, the CIC institutions, and the nation. The unit has, in the past six years, established a national reputation as a leader in the transdiscipline of African American Studies and Black Studies more broadly. In theory, department status, compared to program status, provides a unit with considerable autonomy and control in regard to faculty hires, tenure decisions, and curriculum. In practice, however, AASRP has functioned similar to a department since 2003 when then-Provost Herman enacted Enhanced Rights. AASRP offers a transdisciplinary area of study that is more established and institutionalized than interdisciplinary study groups, programs and centers.

Course Offerings and Degree Programs In 1979, AASRP established an Undergraduate Minor. In 2006, it established a Graduate Minor and Graduate Concentration. The unit recently submitted a proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies and, at the time of this writing, the document is in the second stage of the University review process. Additionally, the unit has expanded its course offerings and increased its student enrollment ten-fold in the past six years. AASRP's course offerings and student enrollment have consistently increased and in some cases, rival those of traditional discipline departments. In the last six years, AASRP has created 43 new courses; it has fifty-six primary and cross-listed courses, and twenty courses in various stages of development (See Appendix for a list of AASRP course offerings). Since Fall 2000, student enrollment has grown from 296 to over 2500 in the 2006-2007 academic year. The majority of faculty and courses at Illinois that focus on the African American experience as a subject of study are housed in or are cross-listed with AASRP. The unit offers almost all of the doctoral level courses on the African American experience.



Faculty The unit consists of eighteen faculty members with budgeted appointments constituting 11.25 FTE (including three at 100 percent, two at 75 percent, 12 at 50 percent and 1 at 25 percent), an Assistant Director/Teaching Associate and an Afro American Bibliographer whom, together, teach three courses annually. Additionally, the unit has almost 40 affiliates distributed across seven colleges and schools. AASRP is currently in the process of offering the affiliates zero-percent faculty appointments. For more than a decade, through the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Program, it has hosted two postdoctoral fellows who teach one course each during their respective year-long appointments.

AASRP core faculty are productive scholars, active participants in professional associations and most have received internal and/or external grants, awards, fellowships, and other honors. Additionally, nearly all have made the "Incomplete List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent" at least once. Furthermore, several faculty members are prominent in the transdisciplines or related professional organizations and currently serve as editors/associate editors or editorial board members of several of the leading journals in Black Studies, racialized community studies, or multicultural education<sup>1</sup>.

Publications and Events The unit produces an annual report, newsletter, and *Black Women, Gender and Families*, a journal developed in collaboration with the National Council for Black Studies, housed within AASRP and published by the University of Illinois Press. In the past six years, AASRP has developed an extensive program that has garnered national attention. It hosts a biennial conference, annual symposiums and distinguished lectures, and a biennial summer institute for public school teachers.

Governance AASRP is a self-governing academic unit that administers its own budget and like departments, recommends its faculty for tenure and promotion. The program is extremely stable with a well-functioning staff and a director who recently began his second five-year term, an Assistant to the Director who supervises the office staff and oversees facilities, an Account Tech II that oversees the budget, and a Secretary III. It also regularly supports six teaching assistants. The unit is governed by existing by-laws and the unit director functions as a department "head."

#### BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS

The budgetary consequences are minimal. These consist of purchasing updated letterhead and other print material. Conclusions regarding the implication of the name change on the following have also been considered:

1. no additional staff or funding required
2. no internal reallocations (e.g. changes in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios)
3. no effect on course enrollment in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments are not necessary
4. no impact on library, computer use, laboratory use, equipment, or other

#### GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION:

There will be no impact on undergraduate education.

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<sup>1</sup> Racialized communities or racialized societies are those in which a super ordinate group arbitrarily selects some phenotypic or genetic differences to define subordinate social group(s) as a different an inferior race. See Racial Formation and Transformation: Toward a Theory of Black Racial Oppression," Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society 3 (Winter 2001), pp. 25; Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth Century Thought," Eighteenth Century Studies 29, 3 (1996), pp. 258-259.





**African American Studies and Research Program  
Faculty, Staff, and Affiliate Listing**

Professors

Alkalimat, Abdul (AASRP, GSLIS)  
Jarrett, Robin (Human & Community  
Development, AASRP)  
Neville, Helen (Educational Psychology,  
AASRP)

Associate Professors

Benson, Christopher (AASRP, Journalism)  
Bowen, Merle (Political Science, AASRP)  
Cha-Jua, Sundiata (AASRP, History)  
Fouché, Rayvon (History, AASRP)  
Hamer, Jennifer (AASRP)  
Murdoch, H. Adlai (French, AASRP)

Assistant Professors

Flynn, Karen (AASRP)  
Gateway, Frances (Cinema Studies, AASRP)  
Kaplan, Sara Clarke (AASRP)  
Lang, Clarence (AASRP, History)  
McDuffie, Erik (GWS, AASRP)  
Mendenhall, Ruby (Sociology, AASRP)  
Millward, Jessica (History, AASRP)  
Muhammad, Ray (Sociology, AASRP)  
Perry, Marc (Anthropology, AASRP)  
Tynes, Brendesha (Educational Psychology,  
AASRP)

Teaching Associate

Turner, Lou (AASRP)

Postdoctoral Fellow

Randolph, Sherie

Staff

Cagle, Karri (Account Tech II)  
Olson, Shirley (Assistant to the Director)  
Sawyer, Sabrina (Secretary III)  
Turner, Lou (Assistant Director)

Affiliates

Allen-Smith, Joyce (Agricultural Economics)  
Anderson, James (Educational Policy Studies)  
Barrett, James (History)  
Berry, William (Advertising)  
Bokamba, Eyamba (Linguistics)  
Burgos, Jr., Adrian (History)  
Burton, Vernon (History)  
Chambers, Jason (Advertising)  
Cole, C.L. (Advertising)  
Dash, Leon (Journalism)  
Davis, Ollie Watts (Music)  
Fennell, Christopher (Anthropology)  
Harris, Violet (Curriculum and Instruction)  
Hatchett, Shirley (Sociology)  
Kluegel, James (Sociology)  
Landrum-Brown, Joycelyn (Counseling Center)  
Leff, Mark (History)  
McCarthy, Cameron (Educational Policy  
Studies)  
Ogbudimkpa, Jerry (McKinley Health Center)  
Oliver, Cynthia (Dance)  
Parker, Laurence (Educational Policy Studies)  
Perkins, Kathy (Theatre)  
Pleck, Elizabeth (History)  
Proctor, Adele (Speech and Hearing Science)  
Scott, Ernest (Art and Design)  
Solis, Gabriel (Music)  
Span, Christopher (Educational Policy Studies)  
Torres, Arlene (Anthropology)  
Trent, William (Educational Policy Studies)  
Weissinger, Thomas (Library)  
Willis, Arlette (Curriculum and Instruction)  
Wilson, David (Geography)  
Wright, Joyce (Library)