

The Reinstitute Africana Studies Program project: Advocating for WMU to return the Africana Studies Program and raising awareness on the relevance of Africana Studies in higher education in the 21st Century

About

Introduced in 1970 after a student protest as the Black Americana Studies, the Africana Studies Program was run successfully for over 30 years. When student numbers reduced in 2011, the program was suspended and there has not been any attempt to review or revamp it. Two years ago a group of faculty who used to teach in the program and a group of concerned WMU administrators decided to take the initiative and lead the process of having the program reinstated. Last year when that spirit seemed to dwindle, this project took up where they stopped and is now determined to ensure that the office of the Dean is well informed about the current situation and how important this program still is in higher education.

Reinstituting the Africana Studies Program at WMU is based on the concerns of faculty, staff, students, emeriti and alumni for the intellectual harm caused when WMU suspended the Africana Studies Program.

Action Agenda

February 18: Workshop and Town hall meeting at the Multicultural Center with **Dr. Venus Evans-Winters**, from Illinois State University

Black History Month Student Essay Contest

March Movie Nights

April 8: Workshop and Town hall meeting at the Multicultural Center with **Dr. David Stovall**, from University of Illinois-Chicago and **Dr. Joyce Piert**, from University of Michigan-Flint

Project Lead Team

Our inclusive and collaborative lead team includes:

Shahied Aquil, MA Student, School of Education

Kristina Bailey, PhD Student, Political Science

Tanya “Mimi” Bellamy, MA, Administrative Assistant Senior and Minor Advisor, Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations

Mariam Konaté, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Gender and Women Studies

Fredah Mainah, PhD Candidate, Instructor HIS and GWS, and Activities Coordinator for Center for African Development Policy Research and project Communication Liaison



<http://www.raspwmu.wix.com/africanastudies>

Goal and Objectives

Our goal: To implement a systemic transformational change towards diversity, equity, and inclusion by advocating, mobilizing and campaigning for the reinstitution of the former Africana Studies Program at WMU

Our objectives are to:

- ❖ Mobilize support for the reinstitution of the Africana Studies Program to enhance the mission of WMU as a diverse, inclusive, and globally engaged research university
- ❖ Publicize the suspension of the Africana Studies program and support its reinstitution
- ❖ Respond to the needs of WMU students to have courses that teach them about the histories and experiences of people from the African Diaspora
- ❖ Include the voices of students in the dialogue about diversity, inclusion and equity at WMU
- ❖ Give students a voice on the issue of the suspension of the Africana Studies Program
- ❖ Bring together public opinions to help administrators understand the importance and role that an Africana Studies Program plays in the academic experience of all WMU students
- ❖ Follow through the reinstitution petition by AFS Faculty
- ❖ Design and conduct workshops and town hall meetings for faculty, staff and students to have their voices heard