



# NOMMO

Power of the word



Vol. I, Issue I, 2004

**Dr. Patton Joined Purdue University on August 1, 2003, as the new Director of AASRC and Associate Professor of English.**

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## From the Director

Welcome to the return of the print edition of "NOMMO: Power of the Word." The African American Studies and Research Center will do a print edition each Fall semester, but this Spring edition is a special issue to review the accomplishments of the past year and to forecast special anniversary related events to be held in the fall. 2004 marks thirty years of African American Studies at Purdue University and twenty years of our annual symposium as well as fifty years since the historic Brown v. Board of Education decision, so we are thinking of the upcoming symposium in terms of an anniversary trilogy. More information about September's symposium is included in the newsletter.

The 2003-2004 academic year has been a very busy one for AASRC; however, I would like to highlight our recent participation in the National Council for Black Studies' 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference as a marker of AASRC's renewed presence on the national scene of African American Studies. Two faculty, two staff, one Teaching Assistant, and six majors and minors drove to the conference in Atlanta. This was an excellent opportunity for faculty and staff to network and for our students to see African American Studies research in action. Student reflection papers about the conference experience emphasized the intellectual stimulation of being "in such a positive cultural environment

*"...a positive cultural environment where there's real concern for the macro and micro issues affecting black people all over the world."*

where there's real concern for the macro and micro issues affecting black people all over the world."

The conference experience also provided a small

snapshot of some of the things that can be done with an African American Studies degree. The conference presenters included faculty and graduate students who hope to secure faculty positions as well as students and scholars who are interested in non-academic positions. The issues raised at the conference reveal the importance of an African American Studies degree for such diverse fields as public policy, human resources, law, medicine, and business. This point was also reflected in the conference booklet regarding "What Can I Do With A Black Studies Major," which included brief biographical blurbs of Black Studies majors in the fields of science and technology, law, politics and government, business and industry, performing arts and entertainment, visual arts, literature and poetry, sports, education, news media, social, community, and humanitarian services, and religion. This brief listing, which barely scratches the surface of Black Studies majors, clearly illustrates that one can do anything with a Black Studies major.



**Venetria K. Patton**

## Symposium Announcement and Call for Papers

### AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES: MEETING THE CHALLENGE TODAY: LEARNING FROM THE PAST - ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

September 23 - 25, 2004  
Purdue University - West Lafayette, Indiana

The African American Studies and Research Center is celebrating an anniversary trilogy -- the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic *Brown v Board of Education* decision, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center's establishment, and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our symposia series. The convergence of these time markers in 2004 provides an appropriate opportunity and situational mandate to reflect on the state of the discipline, examine current and emerging issues in teaching and research, and envision future directions for African American Studies.

Papers and panels are invited on, but not limited to, the following four broad areas:

1. *The progress and maturation of African American Studies as a discipline and its positioning within institutional structures;*
2. *Diasporic approaches to the discipline;*
3. *Gender studies related to and within African American Studies; and*
4. *Community engagement, activism, and race discourse in the public space.*

Encouraged are examinations on the scope and nature of the discipline; explorations on current and emerging directions in research and teaching; interrogation of issues such as governance, finance, tenure, promotion; and discussions on the impact and relationship of African American Studies programs to institutional diversity initiatives.

Of special interest are topics focusing on diasporic literature, art, and culture; work on individuals, movements, and communities throughout the African diaspora; discussions on migration and identity, inscriptions of home and exile, imagined geographies, transitional movements, post colonial spaces and power, and the politics of race.

The above areas and topics are meant to be suggestive and not exclusive or exhaustive. Papers and panels on any aspect of the theme will be considered.

Abstracts will be accepted for individual presentation and panels. Abstracts should be 250 words or less and submitted by **Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004.**

Decisions about submissions will be made June 15, 2004.

**Selected conference papers will be revised and expanded for publication in a special issue of the *International Journal of Africana Studies* guest edited by Dr. Venetria K. Patton.**

SEND PAPERS AND PANELS TO:

Dr. Carolyn E. Johnson, Senior Research Associate - The African American Studies and Research Center  
1367 Beering Hall, 100 North University Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1367  
765-494-5680 or 765-496-1581 (Fax) - Electronic Mail to: [aasrc@sla.purdue.edu](mailto:aasrc@sla.purdue.edu)  
If sending by electronic mail – please use “Symposium Abstract” as the subject line

## The State of Black Studies by Ronald J. Stephens

Despite continued resistance towards the development, legitimacy, and treatment of African American Studies as a field of study, the field has experienced “extraordinary intellectual growth” (Painter, 2001) since its official recognition in the mid-1960s. African American Studies research and teaching represents a multifaceted, specialized, integrative, and interdisciplinary field of study that provides both students and faculty with a comprehensive analysis of the experiences, contributions, values, beliefs, and aspirations of peoples of Africa and the scattered African Diaspora. The vast content of this broad field, its methodologies, theories, and themes belong in some ways, to the social sciences because of its concern with the identification and solution to human problems; in other ways, it provides an important dimension of the humanities because it seeks to elevate human consciousness. Darlene Clark Hine (1991) captured the essence of the field when she noted that African American Studies research “is not just a matter of empirical versus descriptive, historical, and intuitive, nor is it a matter of politics and economics versus culture and consciousness” but rather a field that is concerned with an integration of approaches and perspectives. Further, the field is concerned with an integration of the objective and the subjective, the material and the spiritual, and the visible and the invisible experiences in Africa and the African Diaspora.

The field, according to Cornell University Professor James Turner (1987), is “a teaching and research enterprise that is committed to the interpretation and explication of the total phenomenon called the Black experience.” Given this multifaceted scope and interdisciplinary nature of the field and the marginalization of faculty with academic training in African American Studies, and faculty with training in the traditional disciplines who hold joint appointments in African American Studies departments and programs, many inconsistencies exist regarding the place of the field in colleges and universities. This is most evident in the introductory course, where there are inconsistencies and different versions of Introduction to African American Studies courses offered on campuses across institutions. As an intellectual endeavor that deals with a unique process of acquiring knowledge and interpreting phenomena, Africana Studies departments and programs encounter other problems regarding the naming of the field, internal and external recognition, autonomy, and expansion. Citing Robert Harris of Cornell University, Maulana Karenga (1993) notes in *In-*

*roduction to Black Studies* that although Black Studies has achieved legitimacy and has become more institutionalized, “the problems and tasks confronting Black Studies demand special commitment and effort to solve and complete.” The most fundamental issue facing Black Studies is “continuing opposition and lack of support from campus administrators,” which involves subsuming Black Studies under Ethnic Studies and/or Interdisciplinary Studies, severe budget cuts, refusals to grant or support department status and other acts negative to the maintenance and development of Black Studies. Challenges include continuously expanding support for and critical participation in legitimate national professional organizations such as the National Council for Black Studies; establishing, maintaining and deepening relations with the community; and building and sustaining positive and productive relations with other academic units. It is imperative that at a minimum these concerns are addressed and corrected to move the field forward.

Over the course of the last thirty-plus years, young scholars, explains recently retired Princeton University Edwards Professor of American History, Nell Irvin Painter (2001), “are now producing interdisciplinary work of stunning sophistication, and the recent trend in expanding course offerings to include the African Diaspora and a comparative perspective of twentieth century history in the Americas, continues to grow, nurture, mature and develop into a significant field of study in American higher education.” What other forces are responsible for this positive growth and development? Citing the success of the W.E. B. Du Bois Center at Harvard, the Carter G. Woodson Institute, not to mention the involvement of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library, Painter adds the pool of faculty at institutions such as Columbia, Penn State, Princeton, Yale, NYU, Temple, U of M, Michigan State University, and other centers, programs, departments, and repositories are producing a new body of scholarship. Moreover, increasingly, the number of scholarly and trade publishers are also competing to publish “books in what they see as a hot field.” There are now more than twenty-four Africana, African American, Afro-American, Pan-African, Black Americana, and Black Studies Departments in the nation that offer degrees, certificates, and some level of graduate education and/or preparation in the discipline that focuses on the African Diaspora.

### About our Guest Contributor

**Ronald J. Stephens** is coordinator of African/African American Studies and associate professor of Sociology at Grand Valley State University. He is also a visiting scholar and an affiliated faculty member of African American Studies and Research Center at Purdue University. He has a Ph.D. in African American Studies from Temple University, and is the author of *Idlewild: The Black Eden of Michigan*, and another book under contract with Wayne State University Press, tentatively titled, *Idle Men and Wild Women in the Black Eden of Michigan*. Dr. Stephens has also written about other African American Studies topics in such journals as *The Black Scholar*, *The Journal of Black Studies*, and *Race and Society*. He has a strong interest in the development of the intellectual tradition of African American Studies research and scholarship.



Ronald J. Stephens



Venetria K. Patton

## Patton Takes Helm as Director

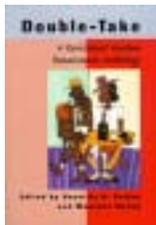
**Dr. Venetria K. Patton** joined Purdue University on August 1, 2003, as the new Director of African American Studies and Research Center and Associate Professor of English. She comes to us from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. At UNL, she served in a number of administrative capacities including a term as Coordinator of African American and African Studies. She earned her MA and PhD in English from the University of California-Riverside.

Dr. Patton's research interests include African American literature, Diasporic Women's literature, 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature, and Feminist Discourse. She is the author of *Women in Chains: The Legacy of Slavery in Black Women's Fiction* (SUNY, 2000) and the Co-editor of *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology* (Rutgers 2001).

Her essays have appeared in Black Studies and Women's Studies journals as well as the recent essay collection, *Postcolonial Perspectives on Women Writers From Africa, the Caribbean, and the US* (Africa World Press, 2003).

Dr. Patton teaches courses on Black Women Writers, the Harlem Renaissance, Contemporary African American literature, Passing & Hybridity in African American literature, Studies in the African Diaspora, the African American novel, and Early African American Literature. Last year she won two teaching awards: Annis Chaiken Sorensen Distinguished Teaching Award in the Arts and Humanities and the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dr. Patton is the co-editor of the latest issue of *The Black Scholar*.



## AASRC Welcomes Affiliated Faculty



Vernon Williams

Professor of History at Purdue University, Vernon Williams is the author of *From a Caste to a Minority* (1989) and *Rethinking Race* (1996). Formerly the editor of *The New England Journal of Black Studies*, he is currently on the editorial

boards of *The Western Journal of Black Studies* and *Journal of African American Studies*. He specializes in African American history and American cultural history.

Vernon J. Williams, Professor of History and Leonard Harris, Professor of Philosophy have been selected as affiliated faculty of the African American Studies and Research Center.

Professor of Philosophy at Purdue University and a non-resident Fellow, Harvard University, Leonard Harris was also William Paterson University's University Distinguished Visiting Professor, 2002-2003. He specializes in social and political philosophy, philosophy of social science and American philosophy, with particular emphasis on African American Philosophy, Marx, Weber, and Dewey.



Leonard Harris

## Kudos!

### Dr. Antonio Tillis on:

Being elected as *Foreign Language Representative* to the Executive Committee of the College Language Association.

### Dr. Sandra Barnes on:

Receiving 2003-4 *Purdue Incentive Research Grant* to study casino entertainment in Gary, Indiana.

### Dr. Joseph Dorsey on:

The publication of his book *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa, and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean, 1815-1859*.

### Dr. Venetria Patton on:

Co-editing the latest issue of *The Black Scholar*.

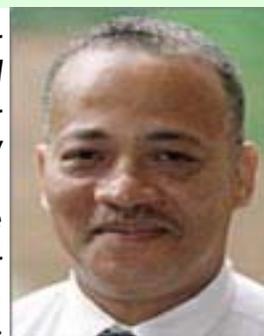
### Faculty Focus: Joseph Dorsey

Dr. Joseph Dorsey is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and the African American Studies and Research Center. He earned his bachelor's degree from Morgan State University, his master's degree from Northwestern University, and his doctorate from the University of California-Santa Barbara. His teaching focuses on interdisciplinary history and comparative cultural studies.

Dr. Dorsey's current research projects include "Puerto Rico and Its Others: Essays on Commerce, Cognition, and Culture, 1508-1873," and "Dissident Tao: Selves, Others, and Rebels among Chinese Contract Workers in Nineteenth-Century Cuba." His essays have been published in *Latin American Perspectives*, *The Culture*

*of Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean*, *Slavery and Abolition*, the *Journal of Caribbean History*, *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, and *Slavery and Abolition*.

His book, *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa, and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean, 1815-1859*, was nominated for several national and international awards, including the Pulitzer Prize. He has received scholarships, fellowships, and grants from the Gulbenkian Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



**Joseph Dorsey**

### Faculty Focus: Sandra Barnes

Dr. Sandra L. Barnes is Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Department and the African-American Studies Research Center. Her research areas include; urban sociology, African-American studies, statistics and methodology, and Sociology of Religion. She received her B.S. degree (1986) in mathematics and economics from Fisk University, Masters Degrees in Operations Research from Georgia Institute of Technology (1989) and Sociology of Religion from The Interdenominational Theological Center (1995), and her Ph.D. degree (1999) in Sociology from Georgia State University.

Some of Dr. Barnes' recent publications include; "Determinants of Individual Neighborhood Ties and Social Resources in Poor Urban Neighborhoods," "The

Ebonics Enigma: An Analysis of Attitudes on an Urban College Campus," "Competition, Race and the Measurement of Female Labor Activity." and "The 'American Dream' in Poor Urban Neighborhoods: An Analysis of Home Ownership Attitudes and Behavior and Financial Saving Behavior."

Dr. Barnes has a forthcoming book *The Costs of Being Poor: A Comparative Study of Life in Poor Urban Neighborhoods in Gary, Indiana* under contract with SUNY Press that is expected to be published in August, 2005.



**Sandra Barnes**

### Faculty Focus: Antonio Tillis

Dr. Antonio Dwayne Tillis is an Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Foreign Languages and Literatures. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Tillis completed his undergraduate work in 1987 at Vanderbilt University receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Spanish Language. Subsequent to Vanderbilt, he worked as a Hospital Products Specialist for Merck, Sharp and Dohme in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and as an Area Sales Manager for Miller Brewing Company in Montgomery County Maryland.

Dr. Tillis completed his Master of Arts Degree in Twentieth Century Peninsular Spanish literature at Howard University in 1995. In 2000, he received the Doctor of Philosophy in Romance Languages with specialization in Latin American, Afro-Hispanic, and literature of the

African Diaspora from the University of Missouri-Columbia. His research includes literature and cultural development of the Spanish-speaking African Diaspora in Latin America. He has published numerous articles within his areas of research and has two forthcoming books, one with the University of Missouri Press on the fictional works of Afro-Colombian writer Manuel Zapata Olivella and the second with Margo Press (London) on the poetry of Blas Jimenez.

Dr. Tillis also serves as Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies for African American Studies.



**Antonio Tillis**

## Study Abroad: To Brazil!

AASRC and the department of Foreign Languages and Literature are jointly offering the Study Abroad program for the 2004 Maymester. The course will be held May 16 - June 11, 2004. This course on Afro-Brazilian culture and civilization is designed to give students an introduction to a unique aspect of Brazilian literature, history, culture and civilization exploring various dimensions of Brazilian culture. Students will engage themselves in country's traditions of culture and history as well.

Listed as "SA 278A and SA 504: Afro-Brazilian Culture and Civilization", this course is an exciting opportunity with 4 weeks of learning about a beauti-



ful country and its wonderful culture. The course also involves extensive class discussions, meeting with Brazilian writers and a two-week study tour in Salvador, Brazil.

This course has been modeled after "IDIS 373 and FLL 201C: Afro-Cuban Culture and Civilization" offered in May 2003. In 2000 and 2001, the Study Abroad program took students to Martinique. During Fall Break 2004 and Spring Break 2005, the program is considering offering trips to Puerto Rico and Paris respectively.

The course is a continuation of our efforts to engage our students globally. So, it is time to pack your bags and get ready to travel into "global Blackness!" For more information contact Dr. Antonio Tillis.

## Fall 2004 Course Offerings

The following courses are being offered by African American Studies and Research Center for fall 2004:

### IDIS 271 & IDIS 271H

#### Introduction to African American Studies

Instructors: Dr. Sandra Barnes, Anatole Balma

### IDIS 373B

#### Issues In African American Studies:

##### "Quest for self"

Instructor: Ruqaiba Desmond

### IDIS 373F

#### Issues in African American Studies: African American Thought, Culture, and Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Leonard Harris

### IDIS 473, 473H, & IDIS 473L

#### Blacks in Hollywood Film

Instructor: Dr. Antonio Tillis

### IDIS 490

#### Directed Readings

Advisor and hours to be Arranged

### IDIS 491B

#### Soul Plus Radio Magazine

Instructor: Stephany Spaulding

Please contact the center for more details and the class schedule. The class schedule can also be found online at <http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/idis/african-american/courses.htm>

## Soul Plus Radio Magazine

Soul Plus is a half hour student produced live news "magazine". As a program with a magazine format, it has the potential for informing and educating the listening audience of WBAA 920 in a manner that welcomes creative versatility. WBAA is known as "the Fine Arts and Information Center on your Radio Dial". As such, Soul Plus Magazine is interested in presenting the "finest" programs reflecting relevant social and global issues from an "Afrocentric" point of view. IDIS 491B gives each student an opportunity to develop an

understanding of the dynamics of effective radio broadcasting. Students will be exposed to various techniques



for planning, developing, and executing pre-recorded and live radio broadcasts. Students who have already taken the course and are interested in joining the Soul Plus Radio Magazine interest group should contact Dr. Carolyn Johnson for more

information.

## At the NCBS National Conference: Student Testimonials

"The National Council for Black Studies conference was an eye opening experience. I was overwhelmed to witness the in-depth analysis of the issues facing the black community. The conference allowed me to meet a number of different Black critical thinkers who are seriously committed to finding solutions to the various problems affecting African people. The conference instilled in me a greater sense of self-pride, self-dignity, and my fight for self-determination."

-Craig Wesley

"As a young and growing black scholar I attempt to take some of the lessons I learned at the (NCBS) conference and apply them to my thinking and critical analysis skills."

-La Nese Chandler

"The National Council for Black Studies conference in Atlanta was both fun and stimulating. I enjoyed being in an academic environment outside of the traditional campus setting. This trip was a great opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas with other undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals in the field of



African American Studies. We were able to learn more about the field and some of the topics being focused on by participating in various sessions, meeting with other students on similar paths during the student summits, and visiting the city of Atlanta."

-Carley Shinault

"My overall thoughts of the conference were positive and all my expectations were met. I found the conference to be very beneficial and engaging and it increased my knowledge of Black studies."

-Andrea Stokes

"This conference opened my eyes to many things. One of those things is different opportunities. There were many people there who were willing to turn over their business cards just to talk to someone like me who wants to further their education."

-Tanjiler White

"I would highly recommend that any student with a major or minor in African American Studies, if given the opportunity attend at least one of these conferences."

-Mary Basham

## Remmers Award

Since 1985-86, the African American Studies and Research Center has coordinated the identification of annual recipient(s) for the Remmers Award. This award has been made possible through the H.H. Remmers Memorial Fund established in 1969 to honor Dr. Remmers who had been head of the Division of Educational Reference and a member of the Psychology Department. The Remmers family had stipulated that the income from the fund be used to assist "Afro-Americans who are pursuing graduate study in the social sciences, men and women, providing the amount of \$500.00 per calendar year." In 1988, the family graciously agreed that the award be increased to \$1,000.00 each for an Afro-American doctoral and master's level student.

Each year, the selection committee solicits nominations from the heads of the social science departments, including communications, psychological sciences, political sciences, sociology, anthropology, and audiology and speech sciences. Nomination criteria include consistent and outstanding academic progress as well as academic, professional, and leadership potential.

A list of Remmers award winners from past six years follows.

2003-2004

Shalon Irving, Sociology  
Rachelle Edwards, Psychology\*

2002-2003

Demietrice L. Moore, Psychological Sciences\*  
Tariquah Nuriddin, Sociology

2001-2003

Keisha Butler, Psychological Sciences\*  
Ebonie Cunningham, Sociology  
Damion Waymer, Communications

2000-2001

Derek Smith, Political Science

1999-2000

Evelyn Simien, Political Science\*  
Elgustus Polite, Audiology Speech Science

1998-1999

Nate Grant, Communications\*  
Rachelle Edwards, Psychology

\*means a Doctoral recipient

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