Greetings AAAS friends and family!

I am pleased to offer this introduction to our annual newsletter. The past year was truly memorable, marked by continued departmental growth, faculty and student accomplishments, and exciting campus programming. In so many ways, whether through our cutting edge classes, institutional leadership, or intellectual contributions during this current moment of national racial upheaval, AAAS demonstrated its indispensability to the Brandeis community and beyond.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge the remarkable work of Delande Justinvil, our esteemed Academic Administrator. Anyone who knows AAAS is fully aware that Delande is the engine that makes our department function. Our success over the past two years would not have been possible without him. I am personally grateful for his expertise, professionalism and always steady hand.

We are thrilled to welcome Carina Ray to Brandeis and AAAS, who will be joining us as Associate Professor this Fall. Carina received her Ph.D. in History from Cornell University and specializes in Africa and the Black Atlantic world. Her specific research and teaching interests include race and sexuality, comparative colonialisms and nationalisms, and the relationship between race, ethnicity and political power. Her first book, Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana, will be published by Ohio University Press this Fall. Carina will be on leave during the 2015-2016 academic year, but when she returns plans to teach a wide range of courses in African and African diaspora history. Words cannot express our good fortune at having one of the nation’s leading scholars of African history joining the AAAS family!

Carina’s appointment is part of an ongoing hiring initiative in African Diaspora Studies that in just two years has transformed the AAAS faculty. Derron Wallace, previously a Florence Levy Kay Fellow, now joins the Brandeis faculty as an Assistant Professor in Education and Sociology with an affiliation with AAAS. A dynamic teacher and world class scholar of African diaspora studies, Derron is a wonderful addition to Brandeis and AAAS. He joins a remarkable group of new assistant professors in African Diaspora Studies. In their inaugural year at Brandeis, Jasmine Johnson (African and Afro-American Studies and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies) and Gregory Childs (History and Latin American and Latino Studies) energized the campus with their brilliance, in and outside of the classroom and demonstrated the vibrancy of African Diaspora Studies as a field. We look forward to building this cohort. In the upcoming year we are conducting a search with the Politics Department for a new tenure-track assistant professor in “Race and Politics.” The size, strength and promise of our faculty is at an exciting place and only promises to get better.

Our faculty, as always, continue to distinguish themselves in terms of research and scholarly productivity. Wellington Nyangoni’s new book, The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade: Imperialism and Developing Countries was published this summer. Jasmine Johnson received a book contract with Oxford University Press for her forthcoming book Rhythm Nation: West African Dance and the Politics of Diaspora. Faith Smith remains hard at work on her forthcoming book Whose Modern? Forging Futures in the Trans-Caribbean, and Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, returning to Brandeis after a year-long sabbatical spent as a visiting professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute, University of Berlin, has made progress on her new book, tentatively titled Millennial Style: The Politics of Experiment in Contemporary African Diasporic Culture. While my book project on W. E. B. Du Bois and World War I continues to take shape, I am also co-editing a volume of documents, essays and historical readings informed by the #CharlestonSyllabus I developed this summer which
will be published by University of Georgia Press. Our affiliated faculty have also had a remarkable accomplishments, highlighted by Anita Hill’s appointment to University Professor of Social Policy, Law, and Women’s Studies.

The intelligence and passion of our students was again on full display last year. The number of students deciding to major and minor in AAAS continues to increase. AAAS students are excelling in every facet of campus life, as scholars, community service directors and organizational leaders. Of particular note, AAAS major Nyah Macklin was elected as Brandeis Student Union President, the first African American woman to hold this position. We had an especially remarkable group of seniors. All four of our graduates majoring in AAAS—Hannah Young, Malika Imhotep, Amanda Pereira and Natasha Gordon—completed senior theses, earned departmental honors and received a plethora of other university awards and recognitions. This fall Amanda and Malika are beginning doctoral studies in African American and African Diaspora Studies, Malika at the University of California—Berkeley and Amanda at the University of Texas—Austin. We wish them all the best and have no doubt that they are destined for greatness.

AAAS’s reputation for dynamic programming continued to grow. Public lectures by professors Christopher Emdin on hip-hop education, Koritha Mitchell on lynching in African American visual and literary culture, and Robert Vinson on the legacies of armed struggle in apartheid era South Africa complimented our class offerings and drew rapt audiences. A special screening of the acclaimed film “Selma” packed the Wasserman Cinematheque, and a subsequent forum moderated by President Frederick Lawrence, featuring myself and Professor Jasmine Johnson, attracted students, faculty and staff from every corner of the campus. We also partnered with the Rose Art Museum and the Brandeis Arts Council to organize a wildly successful guest lecture and visiting artist series titled “Art | Blackness | Diaspora,” that featured Mark Bradford, Jennie Jones, Christiana Knight, and Melvin Edwards.

The importance of our programming, research and teaching proved especially necessary last year given heightened tensions in race relations nationally and on the Brandeis campus. We learned that the issues facing peoples of African descent, whether in Ferguson or Sierra Leone, also impact our students. The work of AAAS, in and outside of the classroom, is fundamentally about demonstrating how black lives have always and continue to matter. Our mission as a department will remain inextricably connected to larger struggles for black freedom, social equality and human dignity.

All of this motivates us to press ahead in the new year with even greater enthusiasm and sense of purpose. We continue to offer new innovative classes, organize stimulating programming, and foster connections with all segments of the Brandeis community. We are especially excited about reconnecting with our AAAS alumni. Clearly the best is yet to come. We look forward to having you join us as AAAS moves into the future!

Sincerely,

Chad Williams
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of African and Afro-American Studies

Photo courtesy of Slippery Rock University
Faculty

Core Faculty

Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman
Associate Professor of English and African and Afro-American Studies

Jasmine Johnson
Assistant Professor in African and Afro-American Studies and Women and Gender Studies
Expertise: Race and diaspora theory, dance and performance studies, black feminisms, ethnography, popular culture and urban renewal and gentrification

Wellington Nyangoni
Professor of African and Afro-American Studies
Expertise: Economic development of Africa. Comparative Third World political economy.

Carina Ray
Associate Professor of African and Afro-American Studies
Expertise: African and Black Atlantic history; West Africa; Ghana; race, gender, and sexuality; comparative colonialisms and nationalisms; migration and maritime histories

Faith Smith
Undergraduate Advising Head, Associate Professor of African and Afro-American Studies and English

Ibrahim Sundiata
Professor Emeritus
The Samuel and Augusta Spector Professor of History

Chad Williams
Chair, Associate Professor of African and Afro-American Studies
Expertise: African American and modern United States History. African American military history. World War I

Affiliate Faculty

Joyce Antler
Samuel B. Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture and Women's and Gender Studies

Gregory Childs
Assistant Professor in History

Abigail Cooper
Assistant Professor in History

Richard Gaskins
Proskauer Chair in Law and Social Welfare

Anita Hill
University Professor of Social Policy, Law, and Women's Studies

Daniel Kryder
Associate Professor of Politics

Laurie Nsiah-Jefferson
Senior Scientist in the Heller School of Social Policy and Management

Janet McIntosh
Associate Professor of Anthropology

Derron O. Wallace
Assistant Professor in Sociology and Education
2014-2015 Events

Fall

Candlelight Vigil and Town Hall Meeting
September 4, 2014

1914-1918: The War Within the War
featuring Adam Hochschild
October 13, 2014

Workshop with Sharon Bridgforth and Lauren Whitehead
October 14, 2014

Racial Formation Theory Today
featuring Dr. Howard Winant
October 23, 2014

Art | Blackness | Diaspora Series
featuring Mark Bradford
in conversation with Anita Hill and Christopher Bedford
October 24, 2014

Meet the Majors
October 29, 2014

Hip Hop, Science and Social Change in Schools
featuring Dr. Christopher Emdin
October 30, 2014

Fruitvale Station Movie Screening and Discussion
December 4, 2014

Spring

Selma Screening
January 21, 2015

Selma and Beyond: A Discussion on Race and Civil Rights
January 22, 2015

Art | Blackness | Diaspora
featuring Jennie C. Jones
Thursday, February 26, 2015 & February 27, 2015

Annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture
featuring Dr. Robert Vinson
March 5, 2015

Art | Blackness | Diaspora
featuring Dr. Christina Knight
March 11, 2015

Living With Lynching
featuring Dr. Koritha Mitchell
March 26, 2015

Richman Distinguished Fellow Lecture
featuring Julian Bond
March 31, 2015

Art | Blackness | Diaspora
featuring Melvin Edwards
April 17, 2015

Candlelight Vigil For Charleston Shooting Victims
June 30, 2015
Event Highlights

Candlelight Vigil and Town Hall Meeting

The vigil was organized by student organizations in response to the shooting death of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, by a police officer in Ferguson, Mo., and the events that followed in the small city just northwest of St. Louis. “The shooting death of Michael Brown is in part so tragic for the fact that it is not unique,” said Chad Williams, chair of the African & Afro-American Studies Department. “It is yet another incident in a larger systemic pattern of aggressive policing of black men and women that frequently leads to their death, and another page in this country’s long historical narrative of black suffering. I am heartened that the Brandeis community has come together to confront these issues that affect us all as human beings. We must use this moment to grow as a campus community and stand at the forefront of a movement to push America to mature as a nation.”

The evening of introspection and community featured a moving poetry slam from Dean of Students Jamele Adams and students from several different organizations, who spoke powerfully to a silent crowd. The Rev. Matt Carriker led the crowd in song, and Chief of Police Ed Callahan shared his insights. The vigil concluded with three minutes of silence as the candles were lit, followed by a town hall forum moderated by President Frederick M. Lawrence, professor Laurie Nsiah-Jefferson and Williams in Berlin Chapel.

“Students don’t come to Brandeis just to learn about the world or to understand the world, they come here to affect the world,” said Lawrence. “It was an honor to be with so many members of this amazing community. I also want to extend a special thanks to our student organizers, Justin Cates and D’Andre Young, for having the vision to put together this wonderfully Brandeisian event.”

Art | Blackness | Diaspora: Mark Bradford

A pairing of one in a million; abstract artist Mark Bradford and Prof. Anita Hill (Heller) spoke together on Friday afternoon, discussing art in a societal context. The two met in the Henry and Lois Foster Gallery of the Rose Art Museum where Mark Bradford’s exhibit Mark Bradford: Sea Monsters is currently housed. The event was part of the Art Blackness Diaspora program, presented by the department of Fine Arts, the department of African and Afro-American Studies and the Rose Art Museum. Funding for the program comes from the Brandeis Arts Council.

Chris Bedford, director of the Rose Art Museum, started off with an open question to both of the speakers and, from there, let Bradford and Hill engage in an open discourse with each other. Bedford asked about how we narrate history—the difference between a liner and a messy version of narration and which one is preferable. To this, Hill stated boldly and somewhat jokingly, “Everyone knows about my messiness.”

Excerpts from BrandeisNOW. Read more: “Ferguson vigil and town hall address institutional racism in the US”, Bill Schaller 9/8/2014

Shermira Pennyman ’15, AAAS concentrator / Mike Lovett
serious as Bedford and Hill discussed their respective and, one could argue, messy paths to getting to where they are today. Hill talked about how she never envisioned being a professor. “I really had no intention of teaching at Brandeis about social justice,” she said. She was on a path to be a lawyer when she decided to work in academia.

Bradford had a similarly non-linear track. He talked about wanting to be a flight attendant in high school. Bradford lacked access to many resources; he said that he had never even heard of the SAT and had no huge prospects for his future. When he realized he was going to be 6’8”, it was clear that his dream of being a flight attendant wasn’t going to work out. So he became an artist. Hill expressed her admiration at what a brave decision Bradford had made in deciding to go into art. “No, no, no. No brave,” Bradford said, seemingly flustered by Hill’s comment. He talked about how working in his mother’s hair salon growing up, art was always part of his life. Bradford explained that the creativity in his paintings is just a continuation of his childhood days arranging wigs and writing on signs the different services in fancy fonts.

Hill asked Bradford what he learned from the women in the hair salon, which started a longer conversation about his childhood experiences there. “They dealt with the good and the bad with dignity,” he said.

**Annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture**

Dr. Robert Vinson, the Frances L. and Edwin L. Cummings Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies at The College of William and Mary in Virginia, delivered the 2015 Ruth First Memorial Lecture, entitled “Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela and the Genealogies of Armed Struggle in Apartheid South Africa.”

Vinson opened by contextualizing the South African apartheid, referring to it as a more “heightened form” of the Jim Crow laws in the post-Civil War South. He explained that white South African minority believed Apartheid to be the “solution to the problem of racial integration and proximity that would lead to competition and conflict”, and enacted a series of governmental acts passed to gradually strip away the rights of the black majority in order to reach this solution.

Segueing into the anti-apartheid movement, Vinson engaged the audience with the life and politics of anti-apartheid activist Albert Luthuli. During his time presiding over the African National Congress (ANC), Luthuli became known for his nonviolent tactics, such as his advocacy for international sanctions against the South African government and organization peaceful protests against apartheid. “Luthuli felt that apartheid was a violation of the Christianity of Jesus Christ, whom he regarded as a drum major for social justice,” Vinson said, later adding that Luthuli even referred to apartheid as “theological heresy”. Vinson
even argued that it was Luthuli’s non-violent protest tactics that paved the way for Nelson Mandela’s rise to primacy in the anti-apartheid movement and that “The Nelson Mandela we knew and loved was actually using a template based on the politics of Albert Luthuli in the 1950s and ’60s. He was the Mandela before Mandela.”

“The Nelson Mandela we knew and loved was actually using a template based on the politics of Albert Luthuli in the 1950s and ’60s. He was the Mandela before Mandela.”

However, Vinson made note that Luthuli fully understood the push for the use of violence, recalling his words “No one can blame brave, just men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods, nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organized force in order to ultimately establish peace and racial harmony.”

The 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, Vinson described, was the moment that incited debates over whether the ANC should continue its non-violent approach to the anti-apartheid movement or if the time had come for a reform in policy. In response to the massacre, Mandela went on to co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a wing of the ANC meaning “Spear the Nation” and which promoted an armed struggle against the current regime, King, Jr. often made connections between what was happening in South Africa and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and had often used Luthuli’s ideas himself. “King regarded himself as an American Luthuli” said Vinson. He explained that King pointed out how “there was a global color line and in order to erase that global color line you had to have a global campaign against all forms of injustice, racial and economic.”

Selma and Beyond: A Discussion on Race and Civil Rights

Following the previous night’s showing of the critically acclaimed film Selma, directed by Ava DuVernay, Rapaporte Treasure Hall filled to capacity as students gathered for a discussion on race and civil rights on Thursday, Jan. 22. Moderated by President Fred Lawrence, the panel featured speakers including Chad Williams, professor and chair of the African and Afro-American Studies Department; Thomas Doherty, professor of American Studies; Daniel Kryder, professor of politics; and Jasmine Johnson, professor of AAAS and Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Beginning the discussion with a historical overview of the Civil Rights Movement and the time period framing Selma, Lawrence pointed to the failure of the Constitution, as it was originally drafted to address the relationship between states and individuals. Lawrence stated that this omission was a deliberate maneuver to avoid the topic of slavery. “Slavery is the one issue that preoccupies the Constitution even though it never showed up in written form,” he said.

Despite the tremendous work and accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movements since, Lawrence emphasized, “The price of liberty is indeed eternal vigilance.” With the timing of the release of Selma coinciding with the pain and controversy surrounding the grand jury decisions on the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases, a point addressed by audience members, race relations continue to be a point of pertinent discussion. It is also an issue that clearly resonates with members of the Brandeis community, as evidenced by the overwhelming attendance.

Describing “Selma” as a serious portrayal of “the perennially anguishing issue of race in America,” Doherty pointed to the historical intersection of race and film. “What Selma does exceptionally well is to bring Americans back to a day... when
brutal, up-front, no-holds barred racism in act, language and law was normative in America, when even people as decent as Atticus Finch would not dream of sitting next to a black person,” Doherty said. Although he acknowledged the flaws in “Selma,” including the perhaps unjust portrayal of Lyndon B. Johnson as a resistor rather than a facilitator of the Civil Rights Act, Doherty commended the film’s brutally honest rendition of the racial tensions of the time period.

Discussing Selma from the perspective of black feminist thought, Johnson claimed the film offers scenes showing what she coins “gorgeous black living,” though not shying away from instances of horrific racial violence and suffering. Johnson also touched on how the film gives insight into “the ways that black women’s bodies and work matters [in the Civil Rights movement],” especially in more intimate settings, also noting DuVernay’s use of creative license when it comes to female characters. “[The audience] gets an ordinary type of black womanhood [in the film] that I think is not inventive, and that we need to see on screen,” Johnson said. However, in the same vein, Johnson asserts a key failure of the film is its portrayal of Coretta Scott King, the wife of Martin Luther King Jr. Claiming the film “represented her as if she did not have her own agenda before [King].”

From the perspective of strategy, Kryder pointed to the genius of King as a political organizer, including his strengths as a “theorist and practitioner.” However, he claimed the film failed to depict the “highly fragmented white power structure,” which he asserted ultimately played in King’s favor. “What Selma shows us is a moment of time when coordination was an advantage of the disadvantaged,” according to Kryder.

Williams also noted that the movie does what “historians have not been fully capable of doing” in portraying the events in Selma. “Selma is doing absolutely essential historical work. ... The work that this film does matters,” Williams said, echoing his speech at the University’s 10th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. “Selma is here; Selma is right now; Selma is in this room.”

During the question-and-answer session Williams noted that the film’s significance derives from its ability to make the audience question their surroundings. “[Selma] reminds us of black pain, what it means to have violence inflicted on black bodies and the type of trauma that has not just for the individual who is receiving the pain, but for the community,” Williams said. “And the eerie thing about that ... is that we need to ask ourselves: ‘to what extent are black lives valued more today than they were in 1965?’ We can’t dismiss that.”

Excerpts from The Justice and The Brandeis Hoot. Read more: “Panel discusses ‘Selma’ portrayal of race and the Civil Rights
Faculty News

Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman

During her sabbatical, Professor Abdur-Rahman was a visiting scholar and research fellow at the JFK Institute at the Freie Universitaet in Berlin, Germany, where she co-taught a graduate seminar on Theory and Methods of Literary and Cultural Studies. She published two academic articles, "'As Though a Metaphor Were Tangible': James Baldwin's Identities", in *The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin* and "'What Moves at the Margin': William Faulkner and Race" in *The New Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner*, both through Cambridge University Press. Abdur-Rahman also published "On Ferguson, the Fragility of Black Boys, and Feminist Futures" on *The Feminist Wire*.

In the upcoming year, Professor Abdur-Rahman will continue to work on her current book project, *Millenial Style: The Politics of Experiment in Contemporary African Diasporic Culture*. This text aims to examine the political implications of generic experimentation in recent black fiction and visual art, engaging the work of such cultural producers as Sapphire, Kara Walker, Octavia Butler, and Wangechi Mutu to investigate how desire both shapes and resists narrative and visual representation. She will also be introducing a new course to the Brandeis University curriculum in Spring 2016, “Within the Veil: African-American and Muslim Women’s Writing.”

Jasmine Johnson

Professor Jasmine Johnson delivered three conference presentations in 2015. “Sorrow's Swing” was presented at Black Portraiture[s] II: Imaging the Black Body and Re-staging Histories in Florence, Italy. “Black Feminist THOT: Dance as Visual Culture” was presented at Third Exposure: Race and Visual Culture Symposium at Wellesley College. She chaired and moderated a panel on "The Economy of Ratchet: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Black Pathology" at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Conference in New Orleans. In addition to these formal conference presentations, Professor Johnson taught a West African Dance Workshop at the joint convening of the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Congress on Research in Dance in Athens, Greece.

In June, Johnson was elected to the Board of Directors for the Society of Dance History Scholars. She continues to work as a board
member of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance.

In April, Johnson won a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend Award and a Mandel Faculty Grant. Her article "Queen's Diaspora" was published in African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal (Routledge). She is currently completing her book manuscript, *Rhythm Nation: West African Dance and the Politics of Diaspora*.

**Wellington Nyangoni**

This May, Professor Wellington Nyangoni published *The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Imperialism and Developing Countries*. This work, originally intended to be one book, is now the first of a two-part volume. He hopes to complete the second book, *The World Trade Organization and Developing Countries*, in Fall 2015.

Over the summer, Professor Nyangoni presented a lecture at Columbia University entitled "Challenges of Trade Relations Between Southern Africa Development Community and The Peoples Republic of China." He also travelled to a conference in Sao Paolo, Brazil to speak on why GATT and the WTO failed developing countries. In addition to this current book project, invited lectures, and Fall courses, he continues to conduct research on Southern African and Chinese trade and its effects on Mozambican and mining Industries.

**Carina Ray**

Faith Smith was one of three panelists on the "Roundtable on Sexualities, States, Governance" event organized by the Graduate Consortium of Women Studies and held at MIT on November 12, 2014. She gave the 2015 Annual Distinguished Faculty Lecture in Brandeis’s Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program this past February. Entitled "Strolling in the Ruins," it used the 1907 earthquake that destroyed Kingston, Jamaica as a context for reflections on intimacy, empire, and the future in both the early-twentieth-century Caribbean and the post-postcolonial disappointment of our present. In early June, funded by a Brandeis Norman Award as well as a faculty travel grant from Latin American and Latino Studies she travelled to Havana to attend the Havana Art Biennial. Of course, that city’s iconic ruins, with its laundry-laden clotheslines, offered another register for thinking about ruins: the repudiated colonial past is always in view -- never restored, but always current and alive. She gave the closing remarks at Third Exposure, the remarkable symposium on visuality and performance organized by the Dark Room Collective and held at Wellesley College in April, (addressed by our own Professor Jasmine Johnson, and attended by some of our concentrators).

Finally, she was the Faculty Host for Jamaica Kincaid, who received an Honorary Doctorate at this year’s Commencement, and she also had the pleasure of moderating a session with the author at this year’s meeting of the Caribbean Studies Association in New Orleans (pictured in photo below).

Derron Wallace is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Education Program with an affiliation in African & Afro-American Studies. His research and teaching focuses on inequalities and identities of ‘race’, class and gender in urban schools and global cities. He draws on qualitative methods to trace the interpretations of difference in local and global contexts. Wallace’s most recent study explored
the national, political and cultural factors that position Afro-Caribbean youth as 'high achievers' in New York relative to African Americans, and 'underachievers' in London compared to Black Africans. For this project, Wallace was awarded the 2015 Distinguished Dissertation Award from the American Educational Research Association."

Throughout the 2014-2015 academic year, Professor Wallace presented papers at conferences for the American Educational Research Association in Chicago, IL; the Youth Studies Association in Copenhagen, Denmark; the Global Blackness Symposium at Duke University; and Sociology of Education Association in California, USA; and the Eastern Sociological Association. He was invited to present his work at Columbia University's Center for Race, Ethnicity and Migration and to offer a keynote address at the British Sociological Association.

With book chapters and articles from these presentations forthcoming, Professor Wallace is currently co-editing a book under contract with Routledge on the construction of masculinity and educational aspirations in an age of neoliberalism.

**Chad Williams**

The current centennial of World War I placed Professor Williams in high demand. He delivered invited lectures related to the history of African Americans in World War I at Franklin and Marshall College, Kutztown University, National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Georgian Court, Princeton University, Slippery Rock University and participated in panels at Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, National Council for Black Studies, and American Historical Association. He also continued work on his highly anticipated book project on W. E. B. Du Bois and World War I. In the aftermath of the June 17, 2015 Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church massacre in Charleston, South Carolina, Professor Williams created the #CharlestonSyllabus, a crowd-sourced list of readings that provided historical context about the shooting. #CharlestonSyllabus received extensive coverage in national and international news outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *National Public Radio* and *The Guardian*. He is currently co-editing *Charleston Syllabus: A Reader*, a collection of primary source documents, opinion pieces and scholarly texts that will be published by University of Georgia Press in Spring 2016. Professor Williams is also co-editing a new edition of *Major Problems in African American History*, to be published by Cengage Learning.
From its inception, the African Diaspora Cluster Initiative has resulted in four amazing faculty hires, with a new search underway and more on the horizon. In addition to bolstering cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration along with diversifying university research, this new initiative aimed to develop related programming in order to further promote engagement in the study of diaspora amongst the Brandeis community. The Diaspora Studies Working Group was initiated in Fall 2014 to bring faculty and students together to discuss issues, scholarship, and works-in-progress concerning the African Diaspora, not only the study of diaspora at Brandeis but on the large. Over the course of six lunchtime meetings throughout the academic year, the working group covered a range of specific themes, disciplines, or regions within the African and other diasporas. Each of these meetings paired two faculty members from separate departments who proceeded to first individually present on/talk about their work, both past and current, as individuals, then transition into how each of these areas within their research inform and interact with one another. These presentations juxtaposed seemingly disparate/varing perspectives and methodologies of diaspora studies while exploring greater themes of diaspora that could yield an interconnectivity between the two. With sessions such as “The Choices and Challenges of Educating Diasporans”, “Imagined Mobilities: Thinking About Movement in Diaspora Studies”, and "Exile, Displacement and Involuntary Diasporas", presenters and attendees engaged in discussions that left the room with questions, comments, and new ways of imagining diaspora.

Future plans for the Diaspora Studies Working Group include the development of thematic symposia, specialized yearly programming, and expansion to include scholars from surrounding universities.

2015 Richman Distinguished Fellow in Public Life: Julian Bond

The Department of African and Afro-American Studies had the honor of partaking in civil rights activist Julian Bond’s Brandeis University residency as the 2015 Richman Distinguished Fellow in Public Life, organized and hosted by the Brandeis International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life. Bond was a co-founder of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, which helped organize sit-ins like the one at Atlanta’s city hall, along with many other initiatives and forms of protest during the civil rights movement. Bond’s journey in the civil rights movement took him from protests in Birmingham to the March on Washington, the Freedom Rides of 1964, the March on Washington and Selma, Alabama in 1965. He began a career in politics in 1965, when he was elected to the House of Representatives in
Georgia. He led an alternate delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, where he became the first African-American to receive a nomination for vice president. He withdrew his candidacy because he was only 28 years old – seven years too young to serve as vice president.

Bond left politics in 1987 and became a college professor. But he has remained active in political protest – he was arrested outside the White House during a protest against the Keystone XL oil pipeline in 2013 – and has been an outspoken advocate for human rights for all, including LGBT people.

"That many had to struggle to gain these rights makes them precious. It doesn’t make them special, and it does not preserve them only for me or restrict them from others,” Bond said. “When others gain these rights, my rights are not diminished in any way. My rights are not diluted when my neighbor enjoys protection from discrimination. He or she becomes my ally in protecting the rights we all share.”

On March 31st in Rapaporte Treasure Hall, Bond was presented with the fellowship award by Brandeis University President Frederick M. Lawrence after being introduced by Associate Professor of African & Afro-American Studies Chad Williams. "Very few individuals in the recent history of this country have, in the spirit of this award, worked towards improving American society, strengthening its democratic institutions, advancing social justice and increasing opportunities for all citizens more than Mr. Julian Bond," Williams said. Bond went on to deliver his keynote address, entitled “How I Got into the Movement”, which concluded with an eruption of applause and standing ovation.

Throughout the remainder of his three-day residency, Bond visited with students and the Brandeis community in events around campus, including a screening of "Klansville, U.S.A.," an American Experience PBS documentary based on a book by former Brandeis professor David Cunningham, now Professor and Chair of Sociology at Washington University in St. Louis. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with filmmaker Callie Wiser, Cunningham and Bond, moderated by Daniel Thomas Kryder, Associate Professor of Politics and an affiliate faculty member of the Department of African and Afro-American Studies. The Heller School of Social Policy and Management hosted panel discussion on social movements, legislation and public policy with Bond, Williams and AAAS concentrator Maya Cooper ’16, moderated by Heller School PhD candidate Sarah Gray. Gray guided the panelists and...
ART | BLACKNESS | DIASPORA

ART | BLACKNESS | DIASPORA was a collaborative project between the departments of Fine Arts, African and Afro-American Studies, the Rose Art Museum, and funded by the Brandeis Arts Council, that brought premiere African-American artists and scholars to Brandeis to engage with students and the community. "We proposed this residency program well over a year ago to highlight the significant contributions of African and African American artists to contemporary culture," said Gannit Ankori, professor of Art History and Theory and head of the Division of Creative Arts. "It advances the foundational social justice mission of Brandeis University and the Rose Art Museum, challenges racial biases that have excluded innovative artists of color from the art historical canon, and supports our commitment to exhibit, teach, and research the histories and cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora."

As part of the project, Cairo-based multimedia artist Lara Baladi visited campus this past November to discuss art created before, during and after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. A month earlier, award-winning artist Mark Bradford met Brandeis students for an informal lunch, and later engaged in a conversation with Professor Anita Hill that filled the Rose Art Museum, where his "Sea Monsters" exhibition was on display. Award-winning artist Jennie C. Jones, whose "Decrescendo with Ledger Tone" was on display in the Rose's "Collection in Focus" exhibition, began the spring semester segment of the project with her February residence. Jones describes her work as an overlapping of histories, residing "at the intersection of art history, music history and black history, layering the formal language of modern art—abstraction and minimalism—over the conceptual and technical strategies of avant-garde jazz."

An interactive lecture by art historian and African American Studies specialist Dr. Christina Knight in which she used themes of diaspora to connect the Rose's exhibitions followed a month later. Internationally renowned sculptor Melvin Edwards joined Professor Chad Williams and Christopher Bedford, the Henry and Lois Foster Director of the Rose Art Museum, for a conversation in front of sculptures from his "Lynch Fragments" series. Displayed as part of the Rose's "New Acquisitions" exhibition, the "Lynch Fragments" are small welded metal works that Edwards has been creating since the 1960s, and they serve as a metaphor for the struggles confronted by black Americans.

The Department of African and Afro-American Studies is deeply saddened by the passing of Julian Bond. A champion for civil rights, Julian Bond was a leader, educator, writer, and relentless adversary of discrimination against black bodies and marginalized peoples at large. We mourn the loss of a great human being whose passion and charisma in his audience through a broad scope of historical and contemporary civil rights issues, including mass incarceration, police brutality, wealth inequality, voting rights and educational equity. Williams noted the trajectory of the civil rights movement from the end of the Civil War through present day. "It's also useful to approach the civil rights movement as a living and breathing thing," Williams said. "We do the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s a disservice by romanticizing it and keeping it frozen in time."

Human rights and social justice activist Roy DeBerry ’70, MA’78, PhD’79 has been named one of two recipients of the 2015 Brandeis Alumni Achievement Award. Interim President Lisa Lynch will honor DeBerry, along with Susan Weidman Schneider ’65, at the award ceremony on Saturday, October 24, 2015 in Sherman Function Hall. “I am honored to welcome Roy and Susan back to campus to recognize their achievements and commitment to social justice. They have brought great distinction to the university, and we are pleased to honor them in the presence of our students and faculty,” said Lynch. The award recognizes alumni/ae who have made distinguished contributions to their professions or chosen fields of endeavor. It represents the highest form of university recognition bestowed exclusively on alumni.

DeBerry was active in the civil rights movement in his native Mississippi, first as a Freedom School student (his teacher was Aviva Futorian ’59, who later encouraged him to attend Brandeis) and later as an organizer of the voter registration efforts of the mid-1960s. As president of the Brandeis Afro-American Society, he helped lead the 1969 takeover of the Ford Hall administration building by black students displeased with the racial climate on campus. It was during this takeover that the occupying students held the news conference in which Ricardo Millet ’68 and DeBerry presented the list of 10 non-negotiable demands, beginning with “An African Studies Department with the power to hire and fire. This means that the committee must have an independent budget of its own.” Promised by President Morris Abram states that every legitimate demand would be met in good faith, it was this demand that initiated the approval of Brandeis University’s Department of African and Afro-American Studies.

After earning a master’s degree and doctorate in political science from Brandeis, DeBerry pursued additional studies at Jackson State, Duke, Carnegie Mellon, Michigan and Harvard. He has held a series of executive-level positions in state and local government and higher education. He recently retired as vice president for economic development and local governmental affairs at Jackson State, where he currently serves as an adjunct professor of public policy and administration. He is also executive director of the Hill Country Project, an economic development initiative that he initially co-founded to create an oral history that documented the civil rights movement in Benton County.

Excerpts taken from Alumni In The News “Roy DeBerry ’70, MA’78, PhD’79, and Susan Weidman Schneider ’65 to receive Alumni Achievement Award”, David Nathan 09/01/15
Student News

Amaris Brown ’16 and Sydney Derfel ’17
AAAS Undergraduate Department Representatives

AAAS congratulates and welcomes Amaris Brown ’16 and Sydney Derfel ’17 as the 2015 – 2016 Undergraduate Department Representatives (UDRs). We look forward to working with them throughout the year to not only strengthen our connection to the student community, but to also create more exciting programming and opportunities for the Brandeis community at large.

Malika Imhotep ’15 and Amanda Pereira ‘15
Research Circle on Democracy & Cultural Pluralism Grants and Student Life Awards

It was a busy year for two AAAS graduating seniors, Malika Imhotep and Amanda Pereira. Imhotep and Pereira received from the Research Circle on Democracy & Cultural Pluralism Grants for their senior honors theses “Native Tongues: A Dialogue between Hip-Hop, HiLife, and Diaspora”, and “Womanhood, Gender, Resistance and Authority In and Through Candomblé of Salvador, Bahia“, respectively. Both students were also honored at the 2015 Student Life Awards in April. Imhotep was the recipient of a 2015 Undergraduate Departmental Representative Award and the Textile Veterans Association Honor Award, given to “a graduating senior who has evidenced outstanding extracurricular activities leadership.” Pereira received the Richard Kaufman ’58 Memorial Prize, given to students “who demonstrates leadership in campus activities and who, through academic achievement, exemplifies the well-rounded student who is likely to have a lifelong interest in his/her fellow man.” This fall, both Imhotep and Pereira will begin doctoral studies in African American and African Diaspora Studies, Imhotep at the University of California—Berkeley and Pereira at the University of Texas—Austin.

Natasha Gordon ’15
Doris Brewer Cohen Award in Justice and Public Life


AAAS 2015 Commencement
From left: Prof. Johnson, Natasha Gordon, Malika Imhotep, Hannah Young, Amanda Pereira, Prof. Williams, Aliya Nealy, Prof. Smith, Shemira Pennyman / Aliya Nealy
and particularly the United States. “Applying the found in the Brandeis University Institutional [Science] Fiction: Blackness in the Global repository. Future” received highest honors and can be

**Nyah Macklin ’16**  
**Brandeis Student Union Presidency**

Nyah Macklin, former Class of 2016 Senator, was elected as the Brandeis Student Union President. While an accomplishment in itself, Macklin’s election also marks the first time an African American woman will hold this position. When asked what key projects she planned to take on during her presidency, Macklin asserts that Brandeis’ “Campus Climate” will take top priority. “Right now, I think that we as students are avoiding these tough conversations because we don’t want to enact any controversy, but I think that having these tough conversations is necessary for creating sustained change,” says Macklin. “I don’t want these conversations to happen one time and then stop: I want it to be a continued dialogue. I want Brandeis to be this lab of intellectual thought and understanding of the type of people that go to this school.”

**Amaris Brown ’16**  
**Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute and Jerome A. Schiff Undergraduate Fellowship**

AAAS UDR Amaris Brown was the recipient of a 2015 Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute internship. The program is a joint initiative created by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to encourage minority students and others with research interests relating to the African Diaspora to pursue PhDs in the humanities. Brown was one of only ten rising seniors to receive this prestigious internship this year, spending her summer working with renowned scholars, attending multi-disciplinary seminars, and undertaking in-depth research. On top of the Schomburg-Mellon internship, Brown was also the recipient of a 2015 Schiff Fellowship. The Jerome A. Schiff Undergraduate Fellowship funds Brandeis undergraduates pursuing innovative research for one academic year in their field of interest. With this fellowship, Brown will continue her research work from the summer into a year-long short documentary film project that will “examine the ways in which race, class, gender and sexuality are negotiated in order to reveal the importance of returning to creative methods to speculate and imagine narratives of contemporary women’s freedom.”
Alumni Spotlight

Jessye Kass ‘13

Jessye Kass graduated summa cum laude from Brandeis University where she majored in African and Afro-American Studies and Anthropology. While at Brandeis, Jessye founded a small, arts-based non-governmental organization in Accra, Ghana. The organization provided free therapeutic arts programming to children in underserved communities and thrived on an international volunteer presence. Jessye had four Brandeis students to intern with her. As she began to comprehend further the ethical concerns of volunteer organizations, Jessye re-worked the organization to be sustainable within Ghana. Jessye then wrote her senior thesis on the complications of voluntourism; focusing her research on power dynamics, reciprocity and sustainability. Currently, Jessye works as a medical case manager for HIV+ persons in the Boston area at AIDS Action Committee. Jessye navigates and supports their varied needs.

Why did you major in AAAS at Brandeis? What did you learn from this major?
I started Brandeis as a privileged little white girl from the suburbs. I had spent a semester before beginning college volunteering in Ghana. Excited, confused and knowing I needed an academic framework for my experience, by my second semester I had declared it as my major. Having not grown up in a diverse community, I was determined to broaden and deepen my knowledge of AAAS and beyond. My relationship to AAAS shifted throughout my time at Brandeis. Where at first it began as a way to stay connected to my love obsession with Ghana, it later turned into a challenging sociopolitical lens in which I was able to challenge my perceptions and grow as a critical thinker. When I started my major in AAAS I had little inclination to how strongly my socialization as a child had warped my understanding of Black history and social, political and economic inequalities; AAAS gave me that knowledge and then some.

Is there a AAAS class you took that was particularly memorable?
My first AAAS class hooked me in with Professor Nyangoni’s Economics of Third World Hunger course. I referred back to that class often, both in recalling amusing anecdotes and related knowledge that continued to prove useful throughout my time at Brandeis.

How did majoring in AAAS prepare you for your current career?
AAAS provided me with a framework and a transferable skillset with which to navigate the inequalities facing my HIV+ clients. My studies educated me to historical factors and current issues, while invigorating me to continue to challenge myself to be the strongest ally I can be. Every day I witness the burden of racism and discrimination that faces most of my clients. HIV disproportionately affects people of color. Black people with HIV are an even further disadvantaged community. Black people account for roughly 12% of the population, yet they also account for 44% of new HIV infections and 41% of those living with HIV. These statistics are reflected in the work I do, with many of my clients being Black or other minorities. My educational background gave me the ability to discuss these challenges with clients and co-workers, work harder to advance their needs and comprehend on a deeper level the structural inequalities and barriers minority communities already face, before HIV is even introduced. Where this is not my long-term career, I know my AAAS lens will be with me always. Wherever I go next for my career, it will be with the knowledge that I must continue to be an agent of change and find ways to empower the voiceless to have their voices be heard.
Course Offerings

Fall 2015

AAAS 5a Introduction to African and Afro-American Studies — Johnson

AAAS 115A — Introduction to African History — Wendorf

AAAS 118B — Race, Prisons and Social Justice — Lynch

AAAS 126B — Political Economy of the Third World — Nyangoni

AAAS 155B — Hip Hop History and Culture — Williams

AAAS 158A — Theories of Development and Underdevelopment — Nyangoni

AAAS 160B — If We Must Die: War and Military Service in African American History — Williams

ANTH 133B — Colonialism and Post-coloniality in Africa: Encounters and Dilemmas — McIntosh

ENG 32B — The Black Transnational Romance — Pugliese

ENG 87A — Sex and Race in the American Novel — Abdur-Rahman

HIST 153B — Slavery and the American Civil War — Cooper

Support the Department

The Department of African and Afro-American Studies is currently in the midst of an exciting period of expansion and reinvention. We have begun growing the size of our faculty, increasing the number of AAAS majors and minors, strengthening ties with alumni, and developing a dynamic range of programs to enhance the study of peoples of African descent within the Brandeis community and beyond. AAAS has also added many exciting courses through the hiring of new faculty and professors.

The assistance of AAAS alumni and friends will be crucial to our immediate and long-term success. Your investment will ensure that AAAS has the resources to sustain our success and build upon it for the future. We welcome donations to support the department in the following categories:

1. General Programming Fund—supports the development of our exciting yearly programming.

2. Faculty Research Fund—provides assistance to AAAS faculty for research related expenses.

3. Student Expense Fund—provides limited funds to AAAS majors in need of immediate financial assistance for class related expenses.

Please contact us for more information or visit: giving.brandeis.edu

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Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men. –W.E. B. Du Bois