About AAAS @ KU

We are where Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East meet.

Founded in 1970, the Department of African and African-American Studies seeks to educate students to function in a multicultural environment and in a global community. In pursuing this goal, our Department contributes in vital ways to the University of Kansas' general education requirements, providing undergraduates throughout the College as well as in other schools with courses through which they can deepen their knowledge and enrich their understanding of the history, culture and experience of African people in Africa as well as the peoples of African descent in the Americas. Our undergraduate and graduate programs recognize the centrality of Africans to the initial establishment of these United States and the continuing significance of their descendants to the nation's social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual growth and vigor. These realities our Department teaches as integral to the American experience. Our programs (minor, BA, BGS, Graduate Certificate, and MA) also seek to impart a sound knowledge of Africa and its diaspora in the Americas as a necessary, specialized preparation for effective leadership and service both domestically and internationally.

Our faculty conducts research that not only enhances our teaching of Africana but also establishes KU's leadership in Africana studies locally, nationally and internationally. Ours is the only department of its kind at a public or private University in Kansas and among the Big XII institutions. We provide general service and a specialized interdisciplinary blending of research and teaching that are critically germane to understanding the universality of human intellection, emotion, and development from a pan-Africanist perspective. Though our Department is situated within the humanities in the College, our academic wings are large enough to span a multitude of fields in the humanities, the social sciences and some professional schools. Our allied Centers and Institute - the Kansas African Studies Center, the Langston Hughes Center, and the Institute of Haitian Studies, - help strengthen our centrality to KU's mission.

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Message from the Chair: 
Dr. Peter Ukpokodu

THANK YOU ALL—FROM A GRATEFUL CHAIR

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and entrances […]” (Shakespeare’s As You Like It).

This Spring Newsletter is my last one to you as Chair of the Department of African & African-American Studies (AAAS) at KU. As I make my exit and welcome my successor, Dr. Clarence Lang, I want to let you all know that I am deeply grateful to you—colleagues, faculty, staff, students, alumni and alumnæ, benefactors, friends, and family—for your support all these years. With your unwavering support during my tenure as Chair, we were able to accomplish a lot, some of which I highlight below:

- We formally established the Kansas African Studies Resource Center (now the Kansas African Studies Center/KASC), the African-American Studies Resource Center (now the Langston Hughes Center for African-American Studies /LHC), and the Institute of Haitian Studies (IHS).
- KASC has secured millions of dollars from the Federal Department of Education Title VI grant competitions over the years, including the current Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) grant; LHC has secured the current Gilder-Lehman /NEH grant “Created Equal,” and co-organized with the School of Business the inaugural Race and Sports in America Symposium; IHS made its mark with work with the UN and the US Peace-keeping effort in Haiti, and the translation for the US State Department of the disputed resignation letter written in Haitian Creole by Haitian President Bertrand Aristide. These allied Centers and Institute were established with the School of Business the inaugural Race and Sports in America Symposium; IHS made its mark with work with the UN and the US Peace-keeping effort in Haiti, and the translation for the US State Department of the disputed resignation letter written in Haitian Creole by Haitian President Bertrand Aristide. These allied Centers and Institute were created to highlight the three primary foci of the Department, and they are doing that successfully.
- Expansion of language courses: AAAS now offers seven languages—Amharic, Arabic, Haitian, Hausa, KiSwahili, Somali, and Wolof. The 2012 External Review Report for our Department confirms inter alia that “Language courses aside, KU overall offers a broader academic curriculum in African Studies than many peer institutions,” and that “The innovative multidisciplinary approach taken by AAAS is currently at the frontier of academic study in this field […].”
- Creation of the MA degree program in AAAS.
- Creation of the Graduate Certificate in African Studies.
- Establishment of the endowed Dr. Marwa Africana Lecture Series. World renowned intellectuals such as Ali Mazrui, Martin Bernal, Molefi Asante, Amiri Baraka, and Nawal El-Saadawi, among others have given lectures.
- Establishment of formal or informal Study-Abroad presence in Tunisia (later moved to Morocco), Ghana, South Africa, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Egypt, and relationship with Central China Normal University in Wuhan Hubei, China.
- Convened the International Millennium Conference of the African Literature Association at KU that brought two Nobel Laureates—Derek Walcott and Wole Soyinka—and other literary luminaries; convened or co-sponsored the Mid-America Alliance for African Studies, the JazzTrain Project with the Lied Center, African Language and Literature Conference with the Hall Center, the Langston Hughes Centenary Conference, the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education 50th Anniversary Conference, Minority Health Disparity Conference, the Lawrence Sesquicentennial Celebrations (on the Black Church in Lawrence), Your Vote, Your Future Seminar, 40 Years of Africana Studies: Reflection and Visualization, Fight for Freedom!: A Century of the NAACP and the Struggle for Racial Equality, 1965 Strong Hall Sit-In: Reflection and Commemoration, Remembering the Art, Politics, and Legacy of Amiri Baraka, Remembering the Legacies of Chinua Achebe and Nelson Mandela, and brought to KU various political and organization leaders—Cape Verde President, chairmen of Nigerian political parties, leaders of the National Organization of Nigerian Women, Nigerian Senate leaders, political leaders from Zimbabwe and Sudan, and the Governors and State Attorneys-General of Sokoto, Zamfara, and Plateau States of Nigeria.
- Establishment of the Multicultural Africana Scholars Program, later consolidated as part of the Humanities Multicultural Scholars program.
- Significantly improved the quality and quantity of faculty contributions in teaching effectiveness, research, and public service. AAAS faculty members have individually won, among others, the American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, Sharon & Jeffrey Vitter Award for Engaged Scholarship, Docking Young Faculty Scholar Award, Craig Anthony (Tony) Arnold Faculty Research Award, Hall Center’s Humanities Research Fellowship, Provost’s Award for Internationalizing KU Curriculum, Vice Chancellor’s Book Subvention Award, Kemper Award, Mortar Board Award, ING Award, Carnegie Research Award, Steeple Kansan
Service Award, American Philosophical Society Award, Fulbright Award, Ford Postdoctoral Fellowship Award, Maghreb Studies Research Award, West African Research Association Award, Black Faculty & Staff Council Unit Award for Multicultural Academic Environment, KU Black Alumni Chapter Distinguished Faculty Award, Hall of Fame Induction of Central States Communication Association, and Hall Center’s Scholars on Site Award. Many serve on boards and consultancies, including the International Museum of Muslim Cultures.

- Significantly improved the quality of students: our student won top prize at the KU Undergraduate Research Forum and others have received grants for undergraduate research abroad. Endowed and EOF grants have provided scholarships for students.
- Our staff received the Essential Piece Award of the Kansas State Department for Health and Environment for service as well as the KU Employee of the Month Award, among others; also initiated Digital Signage for the Department.

Departmental News:

Cécile Accilien -- The Department of African & African-American Studies welcomes Cécile Accilien to its faculty. Dr. Accilien, an Associate Professor, earned her Ph.D from Tulane University and is the author of among other titles, Rethinking Marriage in Francophone African and Caribbean Literatures. Her research and teaching areas cover Haitian Creole language and literature, as well as cultural and interdisciplinary studies of the French-speaking Caribbean and Africa.

Abel Chikanda -- The Department of African & African-American Studies welcomes Abel Chikanda to its faculty. Dr. Chikanda, an Assistant Professor with a joint appointment in Geography, earned his Ph.D from the University of Western Ontario and was fellow in the International Migration Research Centre at the Balsillie School of International Affairs. He is human geographer with research interests in among areas migrations and development, poverty and food security research in Southern Africa.

Other Departmental News:

AAAS MA Program -- Amy Hunt successfully defended her thesis, “No Readership for Peace? American News Media Coverage of Transitional Justice in South Africa and Sierra Leone” and completed her MA program with an African Studies concentration. Her committee consisted of Dr. Elizabeth MacGonagle and Dr. Peter Ukpokodu (AAAS) and Dr. Glenn Adams (Psychology).

My special thanks to Dr. Shawn Alexander and Mrs. Lisa Brown for helping to put this newsletter together, as they have done over the years and in so many other things. I count myself lucky to have been able to assemble such a wonderful and delightful group of faculty and staff to work with over the years. As I hand over the affairs of the Department to Dr. Clarence Lang and return to full-time teaching and research, I entreat you to give him full support so that AAAS may continue on its stellar path.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new, And God fulfils Himself in so many ways, Lest one good custom should corrupt the world” (Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s “Morte D’ Arthur”).

Thank you, my friends.
Peter Ukpokodu, Ph.D.

P. J. Engelbrecht successfully defended his thesis, “Land Reform in Namibia: An Analysis of Media Coverage” and completed his MA program with an African Studies concentration. His committee consisted of Dr. Elizabeth MacGonagle (AAAS/History), Dr. Hannah Britton (Political Science/WGSS), and Dr. Ebenezer Obadare (Sociology).

James Baker, successfully defended his thesis “The Sun do Move’ Lloyd Gaines and Lucile Bluford - Interconnected Histories of the NAACP’s Campaign for Educational Equality” and completed his MA program with an African American Studies concentration. His committee consisted of Dr. Shawn Leigh Alexander and Dr. Clarence Lang (AAAS), Dr. David Roediger (AMS), and Dr. John Rury (School of Education).

Maryam Nichols, successfully completed her non-thesis, MA program with a concentration in African American Studies. Her committee consisted of Dr. Shawn Leigh Alexander, Dr. Clarence Lang and Dr. Peter Ukpokodu (AAAS).

Noemi Tracy, successfully completed her non-thesis MA program with a concentration in African Studies. Her committee consisted of Dr. Beverly Mack and Dr. Shawn Leigh Alexander (AAAS) and Dr. Mariana Candido (History).

Faculty Announcements -- Professor Dorthy Pennington was inducted into the Central States Communication Association Hall of Fame.

Professor Beverly Mack was selected to receive the inaugural Sharon & Jeffrey Vitter Award for Engaged Scholarship, for her project “The American Yan Taru”.

General Announcements -- AAAS Scholarship/Award -- AAAS awarded $3,000 in scholarships this academic year to graduate and undergraduate students.
Faculty News:

Jessica Gerschultz, Assistant Professor of AAAS, received an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship and a Hall Center Humanities Research Fellowship to complete her book manuscript *Decorative Arts of the Tunisian École: Fabrications of Modernism, Gender, and Class in Tunisia* (1948-1972). She will be a Hall Center Research Fellow in Fall 2015. Jessica is preparing a spring trip to Tunisia, where she will attend the retrospective exhibition of *École de Tunis* artist Jellal Ben Abdallah (1921-) in Tunis in May of 2015. Jessica joined the board of the Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran, and Turkey (AMCA) as Secretary this winter, and is continuing her work as an AMCA Review Editor after helping to launch a new reviews program at H-Net Reviews in April of 2015.

Randal Maurice Jelks, Professor of AAAS and American Studies was the Fulbright Distinguished Professor of American Studies in the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Jelks taught The African American Experience Since Emancipation, a course which he rotates teaching at KU. The course had forty-seven students in it. Additionally, Professor Jelks lectured at other Czech Universities around the country and at the American Culture Center in Prague.

Clarence Lang, Associate Professor of AAAS and AMS, published two books in 2015. The first, *Black America in the Shadow of the Sixties: Notes on the Civil Rights Movement, Neoliberalism, and Politics*, was published by the University of Michigan Press. The second was a co-edited volume, *Reframing Randolph: Labor, Black Freedom, and the Legacies of A. Philip Randolph*, published by New York University Press. Beginning in August 2014 and continuing into the spring, he was interviewed by local, regional and national media regarding the chain of events in Ferguson, Missouri following the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown. Lang was also involved in a series of public forums addressing the Ferguson crisis, including a panel discussion sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Lawrence Public Library. In the fall of 2014, he participated in a "fireside chat," sponsored by the Urban League of Greater Kansas City, which focused on black community-police relations. In the spring of 2015, he was a participant in Kansas City’s Eighth Annual Urban Summit.

Shawn Leigh Alexander, Associate Professor of AAAS, published book *Reconstruction Violence and the Ku Klux Klan Hearings* (Bedford St. Martins). He also completed a biography of W. E. B. Du Bois, entitled *W. E. B. Du Bois: An American Intellectual and Activist*, for Rowman and Littlefield’s Library of African American Biography Series. Additionally, Professor Alexander also directed one of the 41 Gilder Lehrman American History Summer Seminars held throughout the world. The seminar, “The Civil Rights Movement,” had 22 secondary teachers from throughout the country come to the University of Kansas for a week-long workshop on the issues of civil rights and presidential politics. This was the fourth seminar Professor Alexander led and it has been renewed for a fifth year. Dr. Alexander also presented his work at various places throughout the country, including the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, Mississippi State University, and St. Louis at the Organization of American Historians. Finally, he was selected to serve on the editorial board of the International Journal of Africana Studies, the official publication of the National Council for Black Studies.

Beverly B. Mack, Professor of AAAS, taught for Osher during the summer. She taught an Introduction to Islam in Lawrence (June 11, 18 & 25 7-9 pm) and at KU’s Edwards Campus (June 17, 24, & 29 2-4 pm). Each course included three two-hour class sessions. She has taught courses on Women in Islam for Osher in previous academic years. In addition, she completed her book manuscript, *Muslim Women Scholars Beyond Asma’u: the Continued Story of the Yan Taru Educational Model into the 21st C*, and continued conducting research with American Yan Taru scholars in Pittsburgh, PA.

Peter Ojiambo, Assistant Professor of AAAS, is completing an article entitled “Cementing the Ground for Kenya’s Secondary Education: The Work of Edward Carey Francis at Maseno School, 1928-1940.” It will be published in the *Africa Review Journal*, 2016; and a book manuscript entitled “Called to Educate: The Story of Joseph Gikambwa and Starehe Boys Centre and School, Nairobi, Kenya” that is expected to be complete in June, 2015. In addition, he recently completed an article entitled “Educating for Global Citizenship: Lessons from Starehe Boys Centre and School” that is under review by the *Journal for International Learning*. Further, he has also published a co-edited a book entitled “Perspectives on Empowering Education.” Additionally, in 2014, he also published two articles entitled “Care Theory comes Alive in An African School: Starehe Boys Centre and School” in...
Professor Ojiambo participated in several conferences in 2014, namely: African Studies Association, November 2014, where he took part in a roundtable panel entitled “The Idea of Kenya: Reflecting on Challenges and Reconciliation;” Mid America Alliance for African Studies, October 2014, he chaired a session on “Ken Lorentz Student Award Paper”; International Association of African Educators Roundtable, June, 2014, where he gave a talk on the “Education Field: My Entry by Serendipity and the Gift of Many Great Teachers”; African Languages Teachers Conference, April, 2014, where he spoke on: “Exploring Instructors Inner Landscape of Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Oral Proficiency of Students.” In addition, in April 2014, he chaired and was a discussant at Annual Conference on African Linguistics in a session entitled “Educational Linguistics.” He also participated in the Department of Education Conference held at the College of William and Mary on “Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century: The Future of International and Foreign Language Studies.” Currently, he is coordinating the planning of the inaugural International Association of African Educators Conference to be held at KU, from September 25-26, 2015.

Other Noteworthy News:

1965 Strong Hall Sit-in

On March 9th, 2015 AAAS collaborated with the Langston Hughes Center, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Historic Mt. Oread Friends to commemorate the March 8-9, 1965 Strong Hall Sit-in.

The day after Selma’s Bloody Sunday 150 members of KU’s Civil Rights Commission, a group composed of black and white students, occupied the hall outside of Chancellor Wescoe’s office. The students came with a list of demands that they wanted Wescoe to approve immediately. The demands included the abolishment of racially discriminatory practices of sororities and fraternities; a rule that the University Daily Kansas could no longer publish advertisements of racially discriminatory landlords or organizations; and the formation of a committee of students, faculty members, and administrators to resolve such grievances on campus. When the administration building was closing for the day, 110 of the participants refused to leave the Chancellor’s suite. Those that remained were arrested by Lawrence police and taken to county and city jails where they were charged with disturbing the peace and then released on bond. That night around 400 conducted a peaceful candlelight march near the Chancellor’s residence, singing “We Shall Overcome.” The following day, the demonstrators returned protesting this time in front of Strong Hall. Wescoe met with representatives from several groups and ultimately met the student’s demands.

Participants on the commemoration panel included a number of the sit-in participants along with historians Bill Tuttle and Rusty L. Monhollon, who has stated, “the 1965 demonstration was perhaps the most successful civil rights protest ever in Lawrence.” If you would like to watch a video of the program please go to http://langstonhughes.ku.edu/lhc-program-videos

Race and Sports in American Culture

The Langston Hughes Center (LHC) has a goal of making the University of Kansas the only university in the Midwest to have a center that studies historical and current issues such as race, diversity, inequality, and other related issues that have social and political importance today. In conversations about the importance of diversity on college campuses with School of Business Dean, Neeli Bendapudi, we have discussed the activities of the LHC and how to make this a reality. One means of accomplishing this goal is to create the Jayhawk Scholar-in-Residence Program on Race, Sports and Society. A visiting scholar program that would sponsor scholars with a distinguished record of research and undergraduate or graduate teaching in the humanities and humanistic social sciences on race, sports, and society to come to KU and work on their projects and lead a symposium every year on a topic related to the themes of the program. Sports are contested spaces and they force us to confront ideas and situations that we would otherwise be mentally segregated from. At KU we have a sports-centered campus and we can use that avid interest in KU Athletics to introduce students and the community to the ways in which race and sports intersect in American society and culture.

To reach these goals on April 23, 2015 the LHC, in collaboration with the School of Business and Kansas Athletics, inaugurated an annual sympo-
sium that examines the intersection of race and sports in American society and culture. The keynote address was given by *New York Times* columnist William Rhoden, who was followed by a panel of former and current KU athletes, including Darrell Stuckey, Rhavean King, Tommie Smith, Eric Patterson, as well as KU football coach Reggie Mitchell and former University of Texas basketball player and Kansas City area native, Tamra Gibson. The event was a tremendous success, over 350 people attended, and plans are already in the works for the second annual symposium as well as fundraising for the Scholar-in-Residence Program. For more information please contact the LHC <hughescenter@ku.edu>

**Student and Alumni News:**

**Derrais Carter,** AAAS alum, earned his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Iowa with the defense of his dissertation, “Beyond the Veil of the Secret City: New Negro Representation in Washington D.C., 1919-1935”. Dr. Carter is currently a faculty member in the Black Studies Department at Portland State University.

**Tarik Black,** a second year AAAS MA student, who joined us from Memphis University, signed with the Houston Rockets and also played with the Los Angeles Lakers in the 2014-15 NBA season.

**Caroline Kastor,** a first year AAAS MA student and KU graduate, signed with FC Kansas City of the WMLS.

**Alyssa Cole,** a KU graduate and incoming AAAS MA student, introduced President Barack Obama when he spoke at the University on January 22, 2015.

**News from our Allied Centers**

**Kansas African Studies Center (KASC)**

Mackenzie Jones, KASC Assistant Director

The Kansas African Studies Center is thankful to all of our friends and supporters for another strong year and to AAAS in particular for an ongoing, fruitful partnership. One major highlight last year came in October when the U.S. Department of Education awarded funding to the Center for Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships for the 2014-2018 grant cycle. The awards will be available through 2018 for the six African languages that AAAS offers on campus: Arabic, Amharic, Hausa, Kiswahili, Somali, and Wolof. The Center administers academic year awards and summer awards, both of which provide tuition and a stipend. For more information about this opportunity for both undergraduate and graduate students, go to: [http://flas.ku.edu/](http://flas.ku.edu/).

Last fall, KASC also had the great pleasure to welcome the Mid-America Alliance for African Studies (MAAAS) back to its KU birthplace for the organization’s 20th annual meeting, with the theme “African Studies: Concepts and Practices for Decolonizing Knowledge.” This was the fifth time that KASC has hosted the annual gathering since the inaugural MAAAS meeting was held at KU in 1995. We welcomed back as keynote speaker Dr. Garth Myers, former KASC Director, former MAAAS President, and a founding member of MAAAS.

In November of 2015, KASC hosted a timely panel discussion on the Ebola outbreak featuring the perspectives of three leading KU social scientists (Glenn Adams, Sandra Gray, and Ebenezer Obadare) about health, the state, and society. More than 120 individuals in attendance at this public event learned in greater depth about the Ebola outbreak and the context in which it occurred.

Other noteworthy KASC programming in the spring included the Fifth Annual Graduate Research Workshop and a celebration of Wole Soyinka’s 80th birthday with performances of “African Literature in Rhythmic Cadence.”

For the 2015-16 academic year, Byron-Caminero-Santangelo (English/Environmental Studies) is serving as KASC’s interim director while Liz MacGonagle (AAAS/History) is on research leave, and Mackenzie Jones has stepped into the role of Assistant Director after Daniel Atkinson’s departure.

**Langston Hughes Center (LHC)**

Shawn Leigh Alexander, Director and Associate Professor of AAAS

This year the The Langston Hughes Center (LHC) continued its Jesse B. Semple Brownbag series with six lectures, “Justice Postponed is Justice Denied: Lucile Bluford and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Missouri” (James Baker), “Push, Precious, and the Trauma of Literary Adoption” (Ayesha Harrison, LHVP, Ohio University), “Rehabilitation and Frustration: Richard Pryor and his Struggles with Hollywood Superstardom...”
in the 1980s” (Ray Pence), “Those Left Behind: Bridging Ferguson and Reproductive Justice” (Olubukola Gbadegesin, St. Louis University), “Living in Infamy: Felony Disfranchisement and the History of American Citizenship” (Pippa Holloway, Middle Tennessee State University), and “How Social Movements Die: Repression and Demobilization of the Republic of New Africa” (Christian Davenport, University of Michigan). In addition to this, the LHC screened two documentary films to the public, The Loving Story and Freedom Summer, as part of their continuing NEH/Gilder Lehman Institute grant Created Equal: American Civil Rights Film Series. On March 25th the LHC held a special screening of Selma with a discussion featuring KU faculty Kevin Willmott, Betsy Esche, and AAAS graduate student Melissa Foree. The center also co-sponsored the 1965 Strong Hall Sit-in: Reflection and Commemoration. Finally, in April the LHC inaugurated the Race and Sports symposium in conjunction with KU’s School of Business and Department of Athletics. The program, featuring New York Time’s columnist William Rhoden and a number of former KU athletes was a tremendous success and preparations are already in the making for the 2015-16 event.

In addition to this activity the Center is continuing to work with African Americanists and scholars generally interested in the study of race and culture in American society at KU to outline the future activities of the LHC. Central to those activities will be the LHC’s commitment to becoming a strong academic research and educational center built upon the legacy and creative and intellectual insight of African American author, poet, playwright, folklorist and social critic, Langston Hughes. To that end the Center’s director is working with African Americanists at KU to seek grants and funding to carry out these activities.

For more information about the LHC including programming and scheduling go to http://langstonhughes.ku.edu

Support AAAS

Why support African and African-American Studies @ KU?

By giving to AAAS, you contribute to the continued development of African and African-American academic activities, outreach, lectures, seminars and research programs at KU and throughout the region. You also strengthen our international outreach.

Your donations will also aid in supporting student scholarships, faculty research, teaching awards, service awards, and overall improvement of the Department.

To support AAAS please send your donation, clearly marked for the Department of African and African-American Studies, to the following address:

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PO Box 928
Lawrence, KS 66044-0928

1-800-444-4201

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Thank you for your support.

For more information about the LHC including programing and scheduling go to http://langstonhughes.ku.edu