

Indiana State University

2005 - 2006 Academic Annual Report

Department of African & African American Studies

Year in Review

Accomplishments

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-2007 year that will contribute to this effort? [Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.]

1. The Department continued to see an increased number of majors and minors, despite the loss of one of our three full-time faculty members. 2. Prof. Prouty received one of sixteen Promising Scholars grants. His project will involve students from ISU in a research project that examines the history of jazz in the area. This will be an outstanding opportunity for students to work with a faculty member in a project of experiential learning and community engagement.

Research and Scholarship

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship that is focused primarily on contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

Prof. Prouty published three peer-reviewed articles in 2005-2006: 2006: "Orality, Literacy, and Mediating Musical Experience: Rethinking Oral Tradition in the Learning of Jazz Improvisation" *Popular Music and Society*. Vol. 29, no. 3 (peer-reviewed) 2005: "The History of Jazz Education: A Critical Reassessment" *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*. Vol. 26, no. 2 (peer-reviewed) 2005: "Continuity and Contrast in Jazz Improvisation: A Comparison of Woody Shaw's Solos on Two Recordings of 'Jean Marie'" *International Jazz Archives Journal*. Vol 2, no.4 (peer-reviewed) He also delivered several conference papers: Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Ethnomusicology and Jazz Studies Conference in New York City in January, 2006. Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Society for American Music & Center for Black Music Research in Chicago, IL. In March, 2006. Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Society for Ethnomusicology – Midwest Chapter, in Columbus, Ohio in April, 2006. He was elected Chairman for next year's conference. Affiliated faculty members, of course, delivered more than a dozen papers at professional conferences, and published many more articles and several books. Just one outstanding example was Prof. William Giffin (History), who published *African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio*, which was nominated for the Bancroft Prize, the highest honor given to any work in American history.

Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

There are few grants available in the field of African Studies. Prof. Prouty received a Promising Scholars grant for the 2006-2007 academic year. Prof. Prouty and all of the program's affiliated faculty members are active in a variety of professional organizations, many of them in leadership

positions. Both Prof. Prouty and Rev. Clark are active in the community, often speaking to a wide range of groups. A small sample of their activities would include: Rev. Clark also was on a panel discussing “Black Churches in Black Communities” at the Bethlehem Temple on February 28, 2006. Rev. Clark was a speaker at the 14th & Chestnut Community Center on MLK day. Rev. Clark also gave a speech about Black History at the McLean School in February, 2006. Rev. Clark was given an award from the Initiative of Residential Life for the positive influence he has made on the academic success of 1st year students. Rev. Clark also was picked “Professor of the Month” in January, 2006 by the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority. Dr. Muyumba traveled with the Ebony Majestic Choir to Lexington, Ky. in November, 2005 to present a paper at the Assoc. for Black Culture Centers Conference. Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Ethnomusicology and Jazz Studies Conference in New York City in January, 2006. Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Society for American Music & Center for Black Music Research in Chicago, IL. In March, 2006. Dr. Prouty presented a paper at the Society for Ethnomusicology – Midwest Chapter, in Columbus, Ohio in April, 2006. He was elected Chairman for next year’s conference.

Teaching

We would like to highlight innovative approaches to teaching. Has your department developed any pedagogies or practices you’d like to share with us? Please describe briefly.

Profs. Prouty and Clark continue to develop their courses and engage students with a variety of experiential learning projects. Prof. Prouty developed a new CAPSTONE course this year, which was approved this past year. Prof. Prouty taught a learning community last fall. Prof. Clark remains one of the most important and valuable members of the African and African American Studies Program, as evidenced by his many activities this past year. A small sample of his commitment to students would include: Rev. Clark also was on a panel discussing “Black Churches in Black Communities” at the Bethlehem Temple on February 28, 2006. Rev. Clark was a speaker at the 14th & Chestnut Community Center on MLK day. Rev. Clark also gave a speech about Black History at the McLean School in February, 2006. Rev. Clark was given an award from the Initiative of Residential Life for the positive influence he has made on the academic success of 1st year students. Rev. Clark also was picked “Professor of the Month” in January, 2006 by the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority.

Course Scheduling/Enrollment Management

What have been your greatest challenges in scheduling courses to meet student needs this year? How were you able to overcome them?

The greatest challenge this year was the lack of adjunct funds and the loss of Prof. Muyumba, who passed away this spring. The Department’s courses are nearly all full, most of them beyond the normal enrollment. We were able to meet most students’ needs by full-time faculty members’ willingness to take on extra students and even, in the case of Profs. Muyumba and Prouty, voluntary, unpaid overloads.

Outreach

What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)

Prof. Prouty regularly teaches his Jazz, Blues, and Rock course on-line. It normally fills in about two or three days of registration. He also teaches the course on-line in the summer.

Strategic Initiatives

Community Engagement I

Please summarize your faculty's efforts in community engagement this year.

The Department regularly participates in events and programs sponsored by the African American Cultural Center. Examples of faculty activities include: 1. Prof. Prouty participated in the Black Leadership Conference, organized by the Black Student Union and the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. Panel entitles "Do You Have a Mentor: Best Practices for Mentoring Minorities." February 2006 2. Profs. Prouty and Clark served as mentors for the Mentoring Assistance for Prospective Scholars Program (M.A.P.S.). Two students, Keyuna Baker (AAAS minor) Rebecca Sims (AAAS major) worked within the Department during the academic year. Profs. Prouty and Clark were panelists for a session organized by the African Student Union and the M.A.P.S. Program on Race in the Media. February 2006

Experiential Learning

We are interested in hearing about any innovative approaches you might have taken to incorporate experiential learning into your course or departmental work this year.

Future Goals

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The University is highlighting experiential learning, community engagement, and eminent programs as aspects of our campus that will attract students and resources. How is your department planning to contribute to these strategic initiatives in ways that will help ISU be recognized as a Pre-eminent University?

As part of its mission statement, Indiana State University "is expected to be an inclusive academic community reflective of the greater society, serving a student body diverse in academic interests, age, gender, economic status, and ethnicity." Nowhere does the University curriculum reflect these ideas to a greater extent than in the Department of African and African American Studies (DAAAS). It has, at the core of its philosophy, a deep and lasting commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusiveness. Our Department's role on the ISU campus is to teach not just about African and African American histories and cultures, but in a broader sense, to ensure that the identity of this institution involves a multiplicity of perspectives. The DAAAS grew from a period in history when such perspectives were not included in discussion at this institution, and the maintenance of a program such as this is critical to helping students develop an understanding of the wider world in which they live, a world which is, day by day, requiring a greater knowledge of and sensitivity to, populations of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Indiana State University has long been proud of the fact that this campus has one of the highest percentages of African American students of any public university in the state, and that fact alone should underscore the need for such a program to exist. While the Department takes great pride in pointing to the increased numbers of majors and minors over the last several years, we see our role on the ISU campus as extending well beyond our own students, to being a scholarly academic and intellectual center for African American students and issues related to racial diversity, and to being a leader in the important discussions about race and ethnicity that are so central to American and international culture today. In addition, the DAAAS is committed to the principle of educating Indiana students. Many of our students originate from historically under-represented university populations, in particular urban areas such as Indianapolis and Gary, and most are first-generation college students. Because many of our students have emerged from educationally and economically disadvantaged areas, the Department sees as an important aspect of its mission to help them make a smooth transition into advanced academic study, and into the workforce after graduation. It is difficult to imagine what more the Department could do

in its current manifestation to increase efficiency, given its low number of tenure-track faculty and increasing student population, both in class enrollments and major/minor counts. While it is believed that the current Departmental configuration provides the best opportunity for the program to succeed (given a full complement of tenure-track faculty and staff), it is also recognized that this may not be possible within the current context. One initiative in which the Department is currently engaged is to strengthen the ties between AFRI faculty and our affiliated faculty in various programs around campus. The Department wishes to give affiliated faculty a more central and definable role in the structuring of curricula, disciplinary philosophy, advising, and the overall maintenance of the Department. While the Department feels strongly that its enrollments and increased major counts for the last few years certainly justifies a search for at least two new tenure-track faculty, it is also recognized that, as a fundamentally interdisciplinary program, the Department will only benefit by the increased visibility and participation of affiliated faculty in different areas. However, given the interdisciplinary nature of African and African American Studies, it is believed that this program could also function well as part of a more collaborative structure. For example, one proposed configuration would join this program with the Department of History as an independent center within that unit. In this scenario, the administrative structures of the two units would be merged, but the major/minor in African and African American Studies would be maintained, and AAAS faculty would retain control of the curriculum for the program. As the Department of History already plays a central role in the AAAS program, this configuration would seem to be a logical fit, particularly in light of the large number of affiliated History faculty who are active in the AAAS program. Another proposal has called for the creation of a College-centered Interdisciplinary Studies program. In this configuration, African and African American Studies might be joined by other interdisciplinary programs whose faculty worked, like those in African and African American Studies, across traditional Departmental boundaries. The details of creating such a center would, of course, have to be worked out by the College, but this Department sees itself as one that is very adaptable to change, and to collaborative configurations. Whatever bureaucratic reorganization occurs, of course, should maintain the curriculum intact, with current AAAS and affiliated faculty in control of the major and minor. The DAAAS has succeeded in becoming an important intellectual and physical center for students, particularly African Americans, at ISU. It is also a vital link between the University and the wider community. Further investment in the AAAS program would only enhance its ability to recruit students to ISU and, in particular, help retain African American students once they enroll here. While much of the curriculum can be sustained by affiliated faculty members, a core of AAAS specialists is necessary to keep the program and center as vital as it is now. In the last eighteen months the Department has lost two-thirds of its tenure-track faculty. To build upon its recent success, the AAAS program—whether in its current form, housed in another department, such as History, or as an independent center in the CAS—needs to replace Prof. Muyumba and Prof. Littlefield. In particular, there is no one at ISU with the expertise necessary to teach the core African history and culture courses. There are a number of faculty members with research specialties in African American history and culture, particularly in the Departments of History and English. But with recent departures and the tragic death of Prof. Muyumba, ISU is suddenly without faculty who can provide students with the knowledge to understand the African foundations for the African American experience. Given the recent growth and success of the AAAS program and the importance ISU places on its African American student population, an enrichment of this Department and/or program should pay dividends for the university.