

Date: May 15, 2017

To: Dr. Scott Casper, CAHSS Dean

From: Gloria Chuku, Chair
Africana Studies Department

Re: Africana Studies Three-Year Report

This Three-Year Report assesses the recommendations made in the Post-APR Action Plan after the 2012-2013 Academic Program Review of the Department of Africana Studies. It is with appreciation that I report the department's new location on the fifth floor of the newly renovated Fine Arts Building, which gives AFST faculty and staff the much desired opportunity to interact more closely than before at the hallways and individual offices with peers and colleagues from other departments and programs of similar academic orientations. Such engaging interactions not only bolster collaboration and interdisciplinary initiatives among College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) faculty on the floor, but also radiate into our diverse student populations. It is equally with excitement that I report the promotion of one of us—Gloria Chuku—to full professor in July 2015. We in Africana Studies department appreciate all the institutional support but also hope for more.

Recommendation 1: Increase Faculty Resources by Hiring Additional 6-7 full-time faculty within three years (2013-2016): 5 tenure-track with at least 2 holding degrees in Africana Studies and 1-2 full-time lecturers

Action: The above recommendation was difficult to be met due to a number of reasons, particularly enrollment factors. However, working with the Dean and Provost, the Department developed a strategic hiring plan. One tenure-track Assistant Professor in Black Comparative Literature was hired in fall 2014. This was a synergistic hire with English Department. We were able to convert one of our adjuncts into a full-time visiting lecturer for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Academic Years. We funded the conversion on a temporary basis using roll-over funds and monies from special sessions. In 2016, the Dean's office extended the contract to a two-year full-time lecturer position with \$20,000 to support the department. We cannot afford to keep up this pattern. Adjuncts still teach many of our courses with inherent problems of uncertainties and lack of continuity. In order to foster the stability and growth of the Department, it is important to increase the number of full-time faculty by at least two additional tenure-track positions.

Recommendation 2: Make Office Space Adjustments by providing the Department with two additional offices; one for adjuncts, and one for student assistants.

Action: In August 2015, we moved to the fifth floor of the renovated Fine Arts Building. The department has only one additional office space, which is shared by our adjuncts and student assistants and which houses secured data of the department. In spring 2017, one of our adjuncts started sharing another office space with Global Studies Department part-time advisors. From fall 2017, an office space vacated by an AFST post-doctoral fellow will be available for our adjunct instructors.

Recommendation 3: Modify Curriculum. A concern brought up by the external reviewers and discussed and agreed upon at the post-APR meeting with senior administration was revitalizing AFST curriculum in order to attract more majors. They recommended making Community Involvement concentration the centerpiece of the curriculum; focusing on history, culture, and literature of U.S. Blacks; and offering courses on gender and sexuality studies, health care, economics, and judicial equity; creating a writing intensive course; developing a STEM-related course; and exploring ways to offer infrequently taught courses.

Action: In response to the above suggestions and in line with the University's Strategic Plan, the Department has begun revising its curriculum by offering modified infrequently taught courses such as Problem-Solving in the Urban Black Community (AFST 385 cross-listed with POLI 340---adjunct); Black Families in the United States (AFST 369); Black Women: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (AFST 370 cross-listed with GWST 370); Black Feminist Thought (under AFST 240: Topics in African and African-American Studies); The Female Offender (AFST 371 cross-listed with GWST 371); African Religions and Rituals (AFST 230 cross-listed with RLST 230---adjunct); Islam in Africa (AFST 314 cross-listed with HIST 360 and RLST 314 --- adjunct); and American Health Care System and the Black Community (AFST 390 cross-listed with HAPP 390 --- adjunct). We have also expanded the pool of courses for our students through collaborative cross-listed new course offerings from other departments. These include: AMST 460/AFST 460: Seminar in Black Hair and Body; ART 349/AFST 348/GWST 348: Black, Queer, and Feminist Film; and LLC 750/AFST 440: Education Policy and Black Community. We significantly modified our AFST 100 with a broader content coverage to reflect the foundations of "Black" experiences in Africa and its Diasporic communities, particularly, the United States. Some of these courses and our regularly course offerings in Community Involvement (CI) have facilitated in exposing our students to the field although none has graduated with CI concentration in recent years. The Department plans to redesign the CI concentration to include leadership component in order to make it more attractive. Moreover, new and old course offerings in the CI concentration align with the curricular goals of CAHSS's anticipated new Public Humanities minor. If the minor is approved, AFST faculty will be critical in implementing the program's academic and civic goals.

To strengthen applied learning experience opportunities inside and outside the classroom through robust civic and community engagement, internships and undergraduate research, AFST Department has since 2013 sponsored and led a number of UMBC students to the annual **Model African Union (MAU)** summits in Washington, DC. MAU provides UMBC students a unique opportunity to study Africa and the African Union through simulation; and to socialize and build networks with students from other

parts of the country, Canada, South Korea and Africa. During the four-day intensive summit, students have the opportunity to serve as ambassadors of the African countries they studied and represented in six key committees—Executive Council; Committee on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights; Committee on Economic Matters; Committee on Social Matters; Committee on Pan Africanism and Continental Unity; and Committee on Peace and Security—and also visit the Embassy Offices of those countries in Washington, DC and be briefed by their Ambassadors. For the UMBC students who had attended the MAU summit, it has remained one of the most satisfying educational experiences that they have had. The Department will be submitting in the fall a new course proposal on African Union and Model African Union.

We expanded the number of our lower level required courses in African studies from one to three to offer more selections for our students to minimize graduation delays caused by few numbers of course offerings. We will be submitting in the fall a 300 level **Writing Intensive** course, with a plan of adding one more in the future, as well as applying for the conversation of a number of our courses into “Culture” designation.

We also expanded the number of AFST Affiliate Faculty members from **three to seven** to facilitate offering AFST infrequently taught courses as well as new ones in Education, History, Psychology, and Visual Arts. Unfortunately, we still rely on our adjunct instructors to teach many of these required courses. In 2013 Fiscal Year, AFST had the highest percentage of part-time instructional faculty relative to full-time of any department in the College (66.7% or 3:6:9) with adjunct instructors teaching 622 of our 809 class enrollments. Since then substantial improvement has been made to increase the number of full-time instructors in the Department who taught 514 of our 758 class enrollments in 2015-2016 AY.

Since fall 2016, we have been working on new academic initiatives aimed at developing **three certificate programs** as a strategic measure to increase our student enrollments and also generate revenue. The three certificate programs are: **a) Healthcare in Africa and the United States; b) African Studies; and c) Law, Race, and Social Justice in the United States.** We conducted a survey to ascertain the degree of interests in these proposed certificate programs. The feedback so far is promising. Although we have some courses in the AFST catalog that can feed these proposed programs we plan to collaborate with other departments through cross-listed course offerings. We have started identifying those courses as well as engaging in discussions with relevant departments such as Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy. However, we need at least one or two fulltime faculty and additional part-time instructors in order to implement the programs. We are yet to develop a STEM-related course.

Recommendation 4: Alter Nature of Department Programming

The external reviewers suggested developing an annual theme for the Du Bois Lecture and linking it with other programs, such as symposia involving students and community participation, as well as involving the department in Black History Month programming.

Action: We have modified the Du Bois Annual Lecture Series to become a full day event with more opportunities for our guest speakers to engage AFST students and faculty, the senior administration, and prospective freshmen before the actual lecture. For instance, in 2015 when Dinaw Mengestus spoke, he held a master class session with

undergraduate and graduate students from AFST, ENG, and LLC. In collaboration with the Admissions Office, we have included student outreach opportunities through a Desert Reception for targeted rising and prospective students and their families a regular feature of the Du Bois Lecture. AFST faculty members have regularly participated in undergraduate Admissions and Orientation events. Over the past three years, the Department has sought and gained the support of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Orientation, the Student Life's Mosaic: Center for Culture and Diversity, the Drescher Center for Humanities, the Social Sciences Forum, and the Departments of American Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, Music, and Political Science as co-sponsors of the Du Bois Annual Lectures.

As part of the Department's outreach efforts to increase the number of its majors and minors, we signed on May 1, 2017 an Articulation Agreement with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). To strengthen the collaborative efforts between the two institutions, AFST faculty members have pledged to serve as a resource to CCBC students and faculty through guest lectures, workshop/seminar facilitation, and other program exchanges.

In 2014, the Department in collaboration with the A.O.K. Library was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Created Equal Grant of \$2,000 to support showing of documentary films and implementation of public programs meant to encourage conversations on civil rights movement and the meaning of freedom and equality in America. Films related to civil rights, freedom and equality were shown and discussed to commemorate Black History Month

We now have a well designed website, informative and user-friendly, and regularly updated.

In fall 2016, the department worked with a number of its majors/minors to revive the Africana Studies Council which had been inactive since 2012. It is now operational with a couple of activities lined up for the next academic year.

In collaboration with the Office of Alumni Relations, the Department conducted in fall 2016 an online survey, with questionnaires sent to about 300 AFST Alumni. The goal was to reconnect with our alumni, update their contact, educational and employment information, and gather more information on their experiences as students at UMBC, how AFST education has influenced their career choices and admission to graduate/professional school, and suggestions on how AFST department can better prepare students for life outside UMBC, as well as how they would like to be involved with the Department. The feedback has been revealing and quite positive. The Department will start in spring 2018 AFST Student/Alumni yearly symposium/roundtable to coincide with the Black History Month. To kick off the initiative, the Department organized in spring 2017 a university-wide event, **Taste of Africa**, in commemoration of the Black History Month and African Cultural Heritage through cuisine and culinary traditions. It was a huge success.

Recommendation 5: Modify Governance Procedures and Documents

Another suggestion by the external reviewers that was also discussed at the post-APR meeting was updating important departmental documents, including our By-laws, and simplifying them for the convenience of readers, especially new members.

Action:

Africana Studies has reverted to its usual governance procedure (after a three-year tenure of an outside faculty) through the appointment of its faculty member as the new chair of the department in fall 2016. In consultation with the Dean's Office, the Department updated its **Merit Policy** and **Workload Policy** in 2015. It has also revised its **By-laws** regarding Committee structure and assignments with clear definition of responsibilities. In fall 2016, the Department created **Mentoring Guidelines for Junior Faculty** and **Hiring Rubrics**. The revisions and implementation of the new policies meant more work for the department faculty. As a small department, we are overwhelmed by service responsibilities, doing more with less. This is why the Department needs additional institutional support.

The Department also needs institutional support to effectively run the **Center for Africana Research**, which it established in 2014. If effectively managed, the Center would foster collaborative and interdisciplinary faculty and faculty-student research initiatives.

Recommendation 6: Increase Perception of University Support for the Department

Another important suggestion of the external reviewers which was also discussed at the post-APR meeting with senior administration is how the Department and the University could develop a long-term strategy that would integrate AFST mission with the overall mission of UMBC; involve the department in the University's recruitment and retention of students from non-majority racial backgrounds; and also garner greater system-wide support for the department.

Action:

The Department along with other departments and programs participated in the formulation of the University's Strategic Plan. In fall 2016, the Department, along with other departments and programs, submitted its **Five-Year Faculty Hiring Plan** and **Research Infrastructure Needs: Five-Year Plan**. Not much has come out of these efforts. In the **CAHSS Dean's Hiring Plan: 2017-2022**, Africana Studies was ranked at the bottom under "Priority 3, Secondary Maintenance – Lecturer (new line, currently visiting lecturer)." The Department read this to mean that there would be no new hiring in the next five years. We hope that we misread the Dean's ranking of hiring priority for the Department; that it is not true. However, it is important to note that the Dean's Office has contributed toward the salary of the lecturer (on two-year visiting term) and the 2017 MAU expenses. The Enrollment Management has been diligent in helping with the AFST-CCBC Articulation Agreement.

The Department is committed to integrating its mission with that of the University's overall mission, as well as in participating in the University's efforts toward the recruitment and retention of racial/ethnic minority students.

Faculty Scholarship Accomplishments

Over the past three years, AFST faculty members have continued to maintain high level of productivity in research, awards and publications. Faculty members Tyson King-Meadows (former chair) and Gloria Chuku were awarded the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Grant of \$75,000 to direct an intensive four-week study abroad and

curriculum development project to Ghana for UMBC students and local K-12 educators in 2014. Unfortunately, the grant was terminated due to the outbreak of Ebola epidemic in parts of West Africa. In 2015, the Department collaborated with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture and won a grant to host a post-doctoral fellow in African American history. The collaborative efforts resulted in the hiring of Dr. Iyelli Ichile, who taught a course for us in spring 2017. Faculty member Gloria Chuku won the UMBC CAHSS Research Fellowship (2013-14) and the CAHSS Dean’s Research Funds (2015-16).

For a department of one full professor, two assistant professors and one visiting lecturer, AFST has done very well in publications and conference presentations. Despite the challenges of maintaining active faculty mentorship, the Department, in the past three years, has remained productive as attested by the following list of publications and scholarly presentations:

Gloria Chuku, ed., *Ethnicities, Nationalities, and Cross-Cultural Representations in Africa and the Diaspora* (Carolina Academic Press, 2015), xlvii + 363 pp.

Gloria Chuku, ed., *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought* (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2013), xv + 342 pp.

Gloria Chuku, *Nigeria: A History of the People and their Culture* (Under contract with Reaktion Books, UK)

Gloria Chuku, “African Intellectuals as Cultural Nationalists in Africa and the Diaspora: A Comparative Study of Edward Wilmot Blyden and Mbonu Ojike,” *The Journal of African American History* 99, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 350-378

AFST Maleda Belilgne serves as the co-chair of the interdisciplinary Sound Studies Faculty Working Group and was one of the organizers of the Sound Studies Symposium here on campus, May 5, 2017. She also presented her work at the symposium. In addition, AFST faculty members have on their record 8 book chapters, articles in newspapers, television appearance, and over a dozen conference presentations.

Post-APR Student Experience, Success and Challenges

One major concern of the external reviewers which was discussed during the post-APR meeting was the small number of AFST majors. Even though Africana Studies faculty members are aware of the declining number of AFST majors and minors across the country, including here at UMBC, we are doing our best with the available resources to attract new students to the Department, nurture and see them through successful and timely completion of their academic programs. Below are the enrollment records for four years:

	<u>Fall 2013</u>	<u>Fall 2014</u>	<u>Fall 2015</u>	<u>Fall 2016</u>
AFST majors	5	6	4	8
AFST minors	12	10	10	14

The graduation rates for the last three years are also listed below:

	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>
BA Africana Studies	1	3	1
AFST Minor	4	5	6

If we add fall 2016 graduates, the total of BA AFST will be **2** and AFST Minor **8**.

The slight increase in our majors and minors and their graduation rates is encouraging, but we should do more to attract more students to the department. We will continue to participate in the Admissions Office outreach and orientation campaigns, and also engage AFST affiliate faculty in expanding our recruitment targets. AFST faculty members are committed to nurturing the recently established partnership with the CCBC as well as exploring other avenues and opportunities with potential of attracting more students to our program. Recently, I participated in an outreach project targeting prospective students for fall 2017: I sent via email congratulatory and words of encouragement to students who have identified AFST as their academic program of interest. We are committed to inclusive academic excellence through teaching, nurturing and mentoring our students throughout their undergraduate education here at UMBC and beyond, an endeavor which aligns with the University's larger commitment to diversity and excellence.

In conclusion, I believe that challenges are part of human existence. Africana Studies faculty and staff will continue to address our challenges, both individually and collectively to the best of our ability. In spite of the pressing needs of the Department, we remain appreciative of the institutional support that we have received in recent years.

