



UNC GREENSBORO

Find your way here



AADS

Dean's Award for the Promotion of Diversity & Inclusiveness

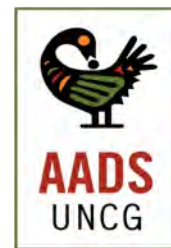
African American & African Diaspora Studies Program



Clockwise starting from top left: AADS graduating students; reading poetry at the Underground Railroad Tree; Dr. Shelly. Brown-Jeffy with AADS students; AADS graduate shaking the hand of Chancellor Franklin Gilliam at the Coliseum; Professor Mena speaking at Afro-Latin American/Latinx Studies Project at CACE; Professor Michael Cauthen and Dr. Cerise Glenn-Manigault with award-recipients; Gathering of the Ethiopian and East African Studies Project; Dr. Hewan Girma with Stanford professor Dr. Sarah Derbew at AADS public lecture.

Nomination Statement

The African American & African Diaspora Studies Program plays a key leadership role in The College of Arts & Sciences in helping to promote diversity and inclusiveness for all students, faculty, and staff. As an interdisciplinary program with a **diverse faculty** (in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity), **rich course offerings** (from multiple disciplines and across the world), **inclusive curricula** (encompassing courses on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class), and **an array of cross-campus initiatives and programming** (including conferences, lectures, workshops, and fieldtrips), AADS is central to the College in creating inclusive social environments, advancing academic excellence, pushing disciplinary boundaries, producing innovative research, and fostering personal and professional development.



Partnering and collaborating across campus with dozens of groups, departments, programs, initiatives, and academic units (including WGSS, History, English, Sociology, LLC, IGS, Communication Studies, Chemistry, Music, Art, the Islamic Studies Research Network, HNAC, and the Honors College), AADS makes the university’s tagline “Find your way here” meaningful. AADS does this for all students, but especially black students. Through the courses it offers and the events it sponsors and co-sponsors, AADS serves as a safe harbor and a launching point for students of all backgrounds exploring the contributions of black people across the world and wrestling with the destructive effects of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination in our society. Every semester AADS does this for its majors and minors as well as the hundreds of additional UNCG students who take AADS classes, participate in its many events and projects, and seek out its faculty for guidance, knowledge, solace, affirmation, and support.

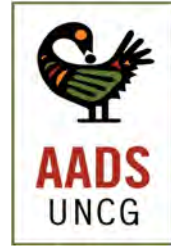
The number of students, faculty, staff, and members of the broader community who are positively impacted by AADS is in the thousands. In terms of classes alone, **since 2016, nearly 6,000 students have taken AADS classes.** These students have gone on to make an even wider impact in the community as educators, attorneys, researchers, artists, and healthcare professionals. Moreover, faculty and staff across the university, benefit from the work of AADS every semester through programming and partnerships. Building on the program’s tradition of uplifting marginalized voices, under the dynamic and bridge-building leadership of AADS Directors Dr. Cerise Glenn and Dr. Noelle Morrisette over the past four and a half years—alongside the program’s nearly two dozen core, affiliated, and adjunct faculty members—**the program has become a model of inclusiveness and positive collaboration across the College, the campus, and the wider community.**

A final note: In a year that witnessed the Black Lives Matter movement on a global scale and on the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding women’s suffrage, it is fitting that the AADS Program be recognized for its steady and deeply impactful work that has helped to make the College and the university not only the leading UNC institution in terms of social mobility, but a go-to university for students who seek meaningful diversity and inclusiveness.

Because of AADS, the College is well-equipped, connected, and positioned to continue supporting the university’s collective growth and development around issues of diversity and inclusiveness. For these reasons, AADS is most deserving of the Dean’s Award. What follows are highlights of the evidence of this work.

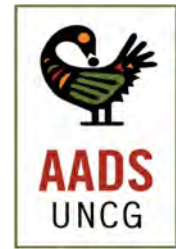
EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

What follows are a range of examples of the AADS program doing the positive work of promoting diversity and inclusiveness in The College of Arts & Sciences. The sections are organized into six areas of impact, followed by supporting documents and letters.



- 1. Incorporating diversity and inclusiveness into the curriculum.**
- 2. Activities with significant impact on the College community in terms of diversity and inclusion.**
- 3. Collaboration with other units that promote diversity and inclusiveness.**
- 4. Promoting and advocating for a campus environment that welcomes diversity.**
- 5. Attracting and helping to ensure the success of students from diverse backgrounds.**
- 6. AADS Faculty as leaders on campus and beyond regarding diversity and inclusiveness.**

1. Incorporating diversity and inclusiveness into the curriculum:



Shared commitment in AADS courses to learning goals that include the following:

- To provide engagement with African American and African diasporic identities that acknowledges race, gender, sexuality, class, religion and region as intersecting categories.
- Develop critical intellectual skills in defining various aspects of cultural and historic expression within the African diasporic experience.
- Engage with issues of social justice as they impact upon people of African descent.
- Explain the effects of racism, sexism, colonization, and class disparities on African people and the ways they have responded to these issues.
- To develop a global perspective of the making of African Diasporas and to analyze the cultural diversity of African people.

Selection of AADS Courses:

Understanding Race

Introduction to African American Studies

Blacks in American Society

Black Women in the U.S.

Africana Literature

Ethiopia in the Global African Diaspora

Race, Philosophy, and Science in World History

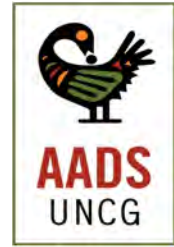
Africans in the Greco-Roman World

As a child of the South, I experienced racism; however, it was not until I arrived at UNCG and enrolled in Professor Cauthen's course did I learn about the systemic nature of racism... Professor Cauthen taught me to honor both my lived experiences and the theories that inform those experiences.

– Dr. Charles L. Chavis, UNCG AADS Major Assistant Professor and Director of the Program for History, Justice, and Race
George Mason University

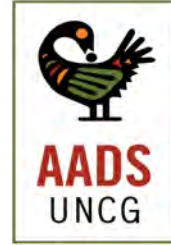


2. Activities with significant impact on the College community in terms of diversity and inclusion:



- Forum series “Race and Racism in American History” (see articles below)
- Conversations with the Community (see examples below)
- National Endowment for the Arts, Big Read (see article below)

3. Collaboration with other units that promote diversity and inclusiveness:



Departments, Programs, and Units across CAS and UNCG:

- Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program
- Department of History
- Department of English
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Languages Literatures and Cultures
- International and Global Studies
- Department of Communication Studies
- Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
- Department of Music, CVPA
- Department of Art, CVPA
- Lloyd International Honors College

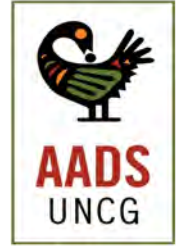
Networks and Projects:

- Islamic Studies Research Network (see lecture announcement below)
- Humanities Network and Consortium (see co-sponsorship)
- Afro-Latin American/Latinx Project (see description below)
- Ethiopian and East African Studies Project (see description below)

External groups:

- Warnersville Recreation Center-City of Greensboro Parks & Recreation
- Community Play!/All Stars Alliance (student volunteering in the community)
- Greensboro Historical Museum (shared programming and fieldtrips with students)
- North Carolina Museum of the Arts (fieldtrip with students and special tour)
- National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institute (fieldtrip and behind-the-scenes tour with curator)

4. Promoting and advocating for a campus environment that welcomes diversity:



- National Science Foundation ADVANCE Adaptation: Spartan Adaptations of Best Practices for Faculty Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (\$999, 807 award)

Three AADS affiliates are PI and Co-PIs: Dr. Cerise Glenn Manigault, Dr. Ayesha Boyce, and Dr. Shelly Brown-Jeffy (see article below)

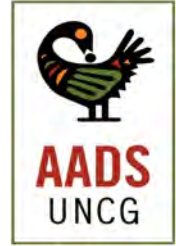
- CACE Conferences 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

These include hundreds of participants, undergraduates, graduates, faculty, post-docs from institutions across North Carolina

2021 CACE theme “The Year of the Black Woman” (see below)

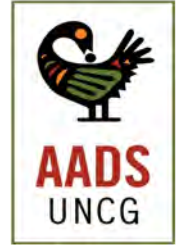
- “Conversations with the Community” series is a vital part of AADS outreach to the campus and beyond offering a monthly topic of conversation on African Americans and the African Diaspora (see examples below)

5. Attracting and helping to ensure the success of students from diverse backgrounds:



- AADS students present their URCA-funded research at the National Association of African American Studies in February 2021. These include Korrey Monroe (AADS minor): "Is there such a thing as a Black Model Minority?"; and Shelby Pennix (AADS major): "Black Immigrants' Perspectives on Black Lives Matter"
- African American and African Diaspora Studies Club, for over the past decade this has been a space for students to learn leadership skills by producing events under faculty mentoring and advising.
- Neo-Black Society, the oldest of the black student groups has a strong AADS connection, with majors and minors. AADS faculty regularly work with these students.
- New Faculty Mentoring program (helping new faculty learn how to better support diverse students), headed up by Dr. Cerise Glenn Manigault is a critical touch point in supporting new faculty members in diversity and inclusiveness in the classroom, lab, and in mentoring.
- Letters of support from students (see below)

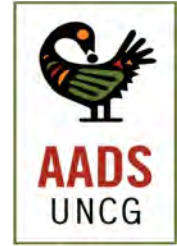
6. AADS Faculty as leaders on campus and beyond regarding diversity and inclusiveness:



AADS faculty are regularly called upon to serve as leaders to speak to and to support greater diversity and inclusion through the research, as well as organizations they are asked to serve on, and public appearances as part of their collective work. Below are a few examples:

- **Dr. Omar Ali** appearing on the award-winning PBS documentary. “Reconstruction: America after the Civil War” (The Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia award); and published “A Black, Latinx, and Independent Alliance,” U.S. Election Analysis 2020, Centre for Comparative Politics & Media Research, Bournemouth University, U.K. (November 2020)
- **Dr. Armondo Collins** appearing on NPR, State of Things, with Frank Stacio in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020 (see article below)
- **Dr. Shelly Brown-Jeffy** appointed to serve on the "UNCG Leadership Development Program for Scholars of Color" pilot program. The Office of the Chancellor and the Office of the Provost in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership, a custom faculty leadership development program focusing on higher education for mid-career to senior-level women of color.
- **Dr. Ayesha Boyce** authored “Strategies for Mentoring and Advising Evaluation Graduate Students of Color.” *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* (Spring 2021); and presentation “Graduate school, work-life balance, and self-care” UNC Greensboro, Graduate Student Association.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Perrill** served as panel chair and presenter, Ceramics on Display: Museum Presences and Practices, “Leveraging Gender: Ceramics in the North Carolina Museum of Art Permanent Reinstallation of African Art,” Arts Council of the African Studies Association 18th Triennial Symposium
- **Dr. Hewan Girma** co-authored piece on affirmative action in France published by *Social Problems* (2020). The paper contributes to our global understanding of equity policies, minority perspectives and racialized emotions.
- **Dr. Torren Gatson** running several public history projects on African Americans, including “Crafting a Community-Engaged Approach: Creating Pathways for African Americans in Public History,” P2 Collective Scholarship Program, Institute for Community and Economic Engagement in the Office of Research and Engagement.

A NOTE ABOUT AADS TEACHING AND MENTORING:



The AADS Program has been model in helping to promote diversity and inclusiveness through the classes it offers, events it produces, conversations it creates, faculty publications, talks, and workshops, and the rippling it generates through its alumni.

Creating diverse and inclusive environments for students to learn and grow is at the heart of what professors do every day in and out of the classroom. AADS faculty members pay close attention to their students and are highly committed to them. They seek out students who need help in their classrooms and they do not hesitate to reach out and support them. They do so by acknowledging the value that each of their students brings to the classroom, affirming their students' efforts, big and small, and pushing them to grow further still—and they do so with lasting impact.

The sheer number of students AADS faculty personally reach every academic year is astounding—that is, their combined impact is meaningful and far-reaching. In all, they teach over one thousand undergraduate students every year (with between 3-3 to 4-4 teaching loads and additional responsibilities). AADS faculty mentor dozens of students (including for the McNair Scholars Program, supporting first generation college, and CHANCE, for Latinx students), advise or work with multiple student groups (such as the African American & African Diaspora Studies Club, the Black Heritage Club of the Neo-Black Society, and the Latina-based sorority Lambda Theta Alpha), and lend their time, attention, and expertise to programing and events.



The Ethiopian and East African Studies Project

East Africa and the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World

Established in 2019 to create a vibrant intellectual space for faculty and students to engage through research, coursework, conference panels, workshops, and public lectures in the histories, cultures, and societies of Ethiopia and East Africa as part of the Indian Ocean world within the global African Diaspora.



L to R: Dr. Omar Ali, Dr. Elizabeth Perrill, Dr. David Aarons, Dr. Becky Muich, Dr. Neelofer Qadir, Dr. Hewan Girma, Dr. Andrew Mbuvi

NEA Big Read: AADS Hosts Community Read

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

(GREENSBORO, NC)—[The African American and African Diaspora Studies \(AADS\) program](#) at UNC Greensboro received a \$15,000 [Big Read grant](#) from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to host a community read of the novel “Silver Sparrow” by Tayari Jones. The community read will include free panel discussions, speakers and family-oriented activities taking place between September 2020 – May 2021.

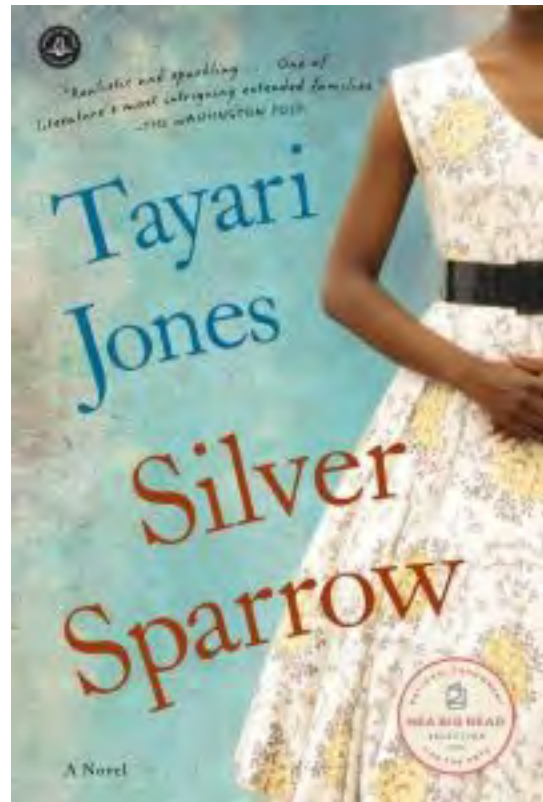
“I am pleased to work with Gerald Holmes of UNCG Libraries to organize programming in support of families in our area,” said Dr. Tara T. Green, an African American literature professor at UNCG and an organizer of the community read. “The book and activities are designed to bring people and families together.”

Named a “Most Anticipated Book for 2020” by The Guardian and other news outlets, [“Silver Sparrow”](#) is a novel told from the perspectives of two maturing daughters of a man who has two families—one public, one private. UNCG is partnering with Greensboro Public Library, UNCG’s Libraries, the Arts and Letters Committee of the Greensboro Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the International Civil Rights Center and Museum to offer programming for adults to school-aged children

Due to the COVID-19 virus, most events will be hosted online. Books will be available in Greensboro public libraries, and discussions will be sponsored by several book clubs. Details about the activities—including the kick-off event, art contest, and major speaker—can be found at www.aads.uncg.edu beginning September 1, 2020.

The AADS program at UNCG is one of 84 organizations nationwide to receive a grant from NEA Big Read, an initiative that aims to bring communities together through sharing a good book.

“We have become even more aware this year of the important ways the arts help us connect with others, and how they bring meaning, joy, and comfort to our lives,” said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “By bringing the NEA Big Read to Greensboro, the African American and African Diaspora Studies at UNCG will provide opportunities for deep discussion and ways to help us better understand one another.”



Africans in the Greco-Roman World

Fieldtrip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC

Africans in the Greco-Roman World is one of the newly funded faculty-student research collaborations which took place through a course offering in the fall of 2019. The course combines classical studies with history and African diaspora studies. The material counters the common



impression that people who lived in and interacted with the Greco-Roman world were only Greek and Roman. For more information and details concerning this project, visit these links [UNCG News](#) [Research Magazine](#)

To view the presentation by Dr. Cerise Glenn-Manigault, Dr. Hewan Girma, Dr. Becky Muich, and Dr. Omar Ali on the “Africans in the Greco-Roman World” project” click the link here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZMNTwQtGKQ>

Michael Cauthen Receives 2020 Honors College Teaching and Mentoring Excellence Award



Professor Michael Cauthen, a lecturer and advisor in the African American & African Diaspora Studies Program, was awarded the inaugural Honors College Teaching and Mentoring Excellence Award. The award recognizes Honors College faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and mentoring in Honors seminars, embedded sections, contract courses, and through their mentoring of Honors students.



Armondo Collins Will Tell His Own Story, Thank You Very Much

By [KAIA FINDLAY](#) & [FRANK STASIO](#) • JUN 29, 2020



THE STATE OF THINGS



Dr. Armondo Collins experienced over-policing while growing up in St. Paul, Minnesota. He visited the Twin Cities this month not just to see family, but to document the stories of Black communities experiencing the George Floyd protests.

For Armondo Collins, growing up in a predominantly-black neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota meant several things. It meant that he had to pass through majority white, wealthy communities whenever he wanted candy from the corner store. And it meant that he got stopped by the police a lot ...

'RACE AND RACISM IN AMERICAN HISTORY' THIRD FORUM

Posted on August 20, 2020



Tamera Jones, Mariah Hunt, Dr. Armondo Collins, Nodia Mena

The third and final part of UNC Greensboro's "Race and Racism in American History" online forum series will be held on Tuesday, August 25th at 6 p.m.

Hosted by Dr. Omar Ali, dean of Lloyd International Honors College and historian of the African diaspora, and Tamera Jones, PhD student in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, the series has explored issues of race and racism in the United States from the colonial period to the present.

The panel will include Dr. Armondo Collins, visiting assistant professor in African American & African Diaspora Studies, Mariah Hunt, a teacher and community activist, and Professor Nodia Mena of the Department of Languages Literatures and Cultures. Opening questions will be asked by Dr. Torren Gatson, assistant professor of history.

"The forum grew out of a need for folks to come together and build community and connectivity during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the early summer," said Dr. Ali. "Since early June we've been meeting on Sunday evenings and then organized these public forums to create spaces for broader conversations about systemic forms of racism and continue to find ways for us to mobilize and sustain on-the-ground activism, educate ourselves about the history of racism in the United States, and support each other during this uncertain time," noted Jones.

'RACE AND RACISM IN AMERICAN HISTORY' SECOND FORUM

Posted on July 20, 2020



Panelists Dr. Torren Gatson, Attorney Xan Marshall, and former Police Officer Kenneth Wilson

The second online forum for the new UNC Greensboro series that began in June will be held Tuesday, July 21, at 6 p.m.

The forum will feature UNC Greensboro public historian Dr. Torren Gatson, civil rights attorney Xan Marshall, and educator and former police officer Kenneth Wilson.

Dr. Omar Ali (Dean of Lloyd International Honors College and AADS), Tiera Moore (alumna and community organizer), and Tamera Jones (PhD student in Biochemistry) will serve as co-hosts.

“We will begin with an overview of race and racism in American history before delving into monuments and public history with Dr. Gatson,” said Ali. “This will be followed by a discussion of the criminal justice system and the Black Lives Matter movement with Attorney Marshall and reflections by Ken Wilson, who will speak about being a black man and a police officer.”

See the livestream on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/HzkG6afPKj8>

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85233435468>

AADS alumna Tiera Moore and Dr. Omar Ali lead “Race and Racism in American History” forum series



A new forum series was launched in June called [“Race and Racism in American History.”](#) The first part of this online forum series was held on June 25, and included upwards of 80 participants (despite being Zoom-bombed and having to quickly re-group). The forum is exploring the protests underway within the broader context of race and racism in American history with a panel of scholars, artists, and community organizers. The online event was hosted by award-winning UNCG historian and AADS Professor Dr. Omar Ali, AADS alumna Tiera Moore, and biochemistry graduate student Tamera Jones.

“The forum was born out of a series of meetings I was having with people in the community over the past several weeks in response to the nationwide uprisings – students, teachers, a civil rights attorney, a former black police officer, artists, and community organizers,” says Ali, who also serves as Dean of UNCG’s Lloyd International Honors College. Ali is the author of the forthcoming book [“In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third Party Movements in the United States.”](#)

Allyship and sustaining systemic change: Another call to action



Dr. Cerise L. Glenn, associate professor of [Communication Studies](#) and outgoing director of the [African American and African Diaspora Studies](#) program, writes about the concrete steps people can take to become allies in the fight for systemic change

Over the course of the past several weeks, UNC Greensboro Black faculty, staff, and students have experienced vicarious trauma and continue to feel emotions of anger, fear, and frustration at the state of our nation. We are not okay.

The recent murders of and police brutality against peoples of African descent have garnered international attention. The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have been eye-opening for many. However, the disgust and pain felt across all walks of life is a 400-year-old wound for African-American communities.

We've seen statements, both formal from members of the UNCG community, corporate entities, and other organizations, as well as informally on social media posts. The statements matter and are appreciated, but also reveal the stark reality we're experiencing during this unprecedented time. Although some are taking important action steps to combat racism and other forms of discrimination, some are failing to recognize and therefore do not adequately address systemic and institutional dynamics that also need to be incorporated into any analysis of the problem. As such, I urge our colleagues to take the following important steps to become an ally, accomplice, and advocate for systemic change.

Your Silence Hurts—Raise Your Voice

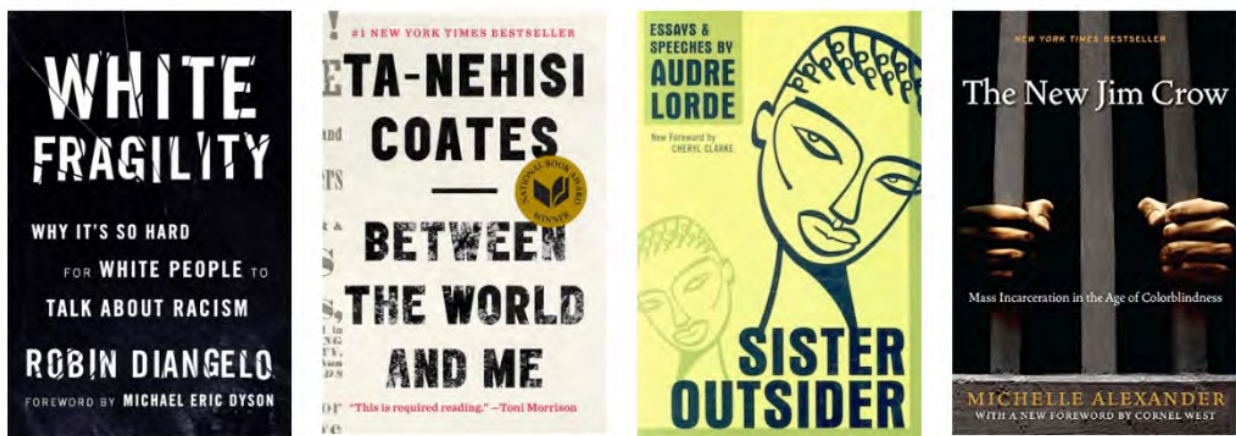
It's time for you to raise your voice and increase your involvement. This is especially true of those in positions of social privilege and power. The time for complicity, passive, and implicit support has passed; you must DO something and SAY something. Understanding is an important starting point. However, we encourage careful thought and consideration for the trauma people of color constantly experience. We need more allies and advocates working toward systemic change. We seek colleagues who appreciate that being an ally takes action with intention. Some of

your actions can be more harmful than helpful, while others make important advances to challenge the interlocking systemic matrices of marginalization.

We have seen postings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s quotes to condone *and* condemn those who would stand up to injustice. He has also been credited with saying: "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Don't be silent. When you hear a racist or sexist comment, speak up. If you witness a microaggression, address it. If you don't, what we hear you "say" is that you think Black lives matter, but not more than your own feelings of discomfort.

We don't only want your empathy; we seek the explicit articulation of your allyship. Sending a text message after a faculty meeting to let your colleague know you don't agree with something is not nearly as helpful as if you would have spoken up at the moment. We are not advocating for you to be combative, but curious. Actively perform curiosity. Ask questions not in an accusatory way, but in a way that creates more conversation and invites others to be more curious. For example, this can be as simple as saying, "When you say XXX, what do you mean?"

Acknowledge, affirm, and appreciate diverse perspectives that can be quickly dismissed. This can be as simple as stating, "I believe XXX had the floor when you cut her off. Please let XXX finish her thought." When you hear issues about faculty disproportionately calling the campus police on their students of color, especially Black male students, ask to put this on the agenda for the next faculty meeting to learn more. Help schedule the visit from the Dean of Students Office about alternate ways to engage "disruptive" students in the classroom when it's offered so there can be a collective conversation. When more people speak up, it sets the tone that these issues matter and are worthy of all of our time and effort. It takes more than one voice to create a culture that affirms inclusivity, and it takes silence to reinforce that it doesn't.



UNCG Libraries has compiled books, movies, podcasts, and more. [Explore these resources here.](#)

Actively Take Steps to Learn About Systemic Racism

We've been asked our opinions on racism in ways that are unnecessarily hurtful, including being sent racist images and statements for input, without people thinking about how traumatic that is for us. We've been sent various disturbing images, such as the horrific George Floyd challenge currently circulating on social media.

Think about the effect of your actions on your Black colleagues and friends. Also keep in mind students and others are contacting us for support. We're exhausted on many levels. Your pathway to awareness and action cannot travel through our pain or the pain of other people of color. We also need "everyday" people to stop and think about what can be done to enact lasting social change.

There are many resources, ranging from academic books to performative expressions to movies and documentaries to short video clips that discuss the long history and long-term effects of systemic racism and other forms of marginalization. They're out there—you need to do the work to engage them. Don't put the burden on people of color who are hurting to explain it to you. We are in a place where we can't continue to sacrifice mental and emotional well-being in hopes of your elucidation.

We need to have true dialogue and action steps, not just talking, about these issues. In order for that to happen, start doing the work before you come to the table. [These resources compiled by the University Libraries](#) provide information to learn about and actively engage anti-racism activities, including books, film, podcasts, and area organizations.

Actively Engage and Support the Work That Needs to be Done

Be courageous. Actively take larger steps, like suggesting ways to genuinely foster equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and then joining the committee to make the work happen. Don't wait for a person of color to do it and/or expect us to do this on our own when it means continually overloading the few Black faculty and other faculty of color we have.

Really commit to the work. There have been several groups, both formal and informal, working for systemic change. Some are more effective than others, with some waning after the phase of initial support. There are current efforts that still need support, such as ongoing work with campus police. Efforts such as Community Play! brought campus police, students, faculty, and administrators together to discuss and improv about community issues. The committee working with police relationships needs support and committed members. As we engage in various service activities related to our positions, consider these service opportunities that do not receive as much attention as other committees.

Understand that this work needs long-term commitment. Our [NSF ADVANCE](#) team speaks to this. This is a federally-funded grant and ongoing project with the aim to reduce gender inequity from an intersectional perspective (see more about NSF ADVANCE projects here: <https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/advance/>). Our team at UNCG has gone through many changes over the years. We've been meeting for the past seven years, with members leaving and joining our team. Some people gave up on the work and left, others stayed consistently with their support, and we found new members who are actively and continually committed to the work.

Our grant is led by four women of color, three are African American women, and the support and engagement of allies has been instrumental. It was disheartening at times to feel like the work we did doesn't matter or isn't worth others' investment of time and energy; however, our allies helped sustain our resolve and actively helped when we felt overwhelmed. It comes from those who assist with budgets, who really listened to what we were trying to do and first sought to understand as they supported us. It's having multiple meetings to help us flush through some of our budgetary and content issues to translate our aims into "grant" language.

Although not part of their jobs, these allies continually gave us moral support, which we needed when others discouraged us from applying for the grant. This comes from senior administrators, who took us to lunch after our first unrealized attempt at submitting our grant submission instead of dismissing us. They also committed to do the work to show their commitment to EDI issues. When we were awarded and celebrated the launch of our grant in October 2019, several members of the UNCG community attended to learn more about our work. This also generated conversations about collaboration to actively support EDI. Both these small and large gestures matter.



Team members of Spartans ADVANCE, a multi-year NSF funded university initiative that addresses the need for increasing diversity and inclusion on our faculty, especially in STEM departments

As we continue this work, please understand Black faculty, staff, students, and administrators may feel simultaneously heartened and disheartened as we process the unfolding events. The diverse groups of protestors and acts of support gives us inspiration. The backlash of racist comments and actions hurts our souls. We're tired and at times overwhelmed, but many remain committed to doing the work that needs to be done—in our communities, friendships, disciplines and at UNCG.

As we keep working, please keep an eye out for future NSF ADVANCE activities, such as the allies and catalysts for change workshops we had to postpone due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Faculty and Staff Senates and Chancellor's Fellow for Campus Climate are also working on initiatives for sustained change. The College of Arts and Sciences has an active [Diversity Committee](#) with many interesting activities. As the outgoing director of the African American & African Diaspora Studies program, I immensely enjoyed planning and working with fellow faculty and students to present work on diverse populations, such as at the annual [Conference on African American and African Diasporic Cultures and Experiences](#)

Other opportunities will continue to unfold—so please be actively involved to long-term commitment to making UNCG's infrastructure as diverse as its student population. As a minority-serving institution, it's critical for the well-being of our university and all members of our community.

Documenting local Black Lives Matter protests



Protest art in downtown Greensboro

On May 25, an unarmed George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer. The horrific video of Floyd's death circulated on social media and spurred a new wave of Black Lives Matter protests and demonstrations across the country.

While Floyd's death represented a tipping point, it was just one of many instances of racist violence against Black people in recent months. The killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others have also fueled activism, and demonstrations remain ongoing.

For educators, researchers, and archivists, the surge of local and national activism has posed several important questions: Who is documenting this activism? How are we preserving the voices of Black activists? How will this story be told in the future?

In response to these questions, UNC Greensboro has launched the [Triad Black Lives Matter Protest Collection](#) to document the Black Lives Matter movement, police brutality protests, and race relations in the Triad region of North Carolina ...

It's an effort that grew out of the organic response of UNCG faculty and staff. After days of protests, many local artists began to express their anger, grief, and calls for justice through paintings and murals in downtown Greensboro. Dr. Tara T. Green, among others, began to document what was happening, taking photos of the art, and striking up conversations with artists and organizers ...

Black Women Had to Overcome Voter Suppression 100 Years Ago and Today

June 17, 2020

This is part of an ongoing Washington Informer series about the Women's Suffrage Movement and an initiative that includes Informer Publisher Denise Rolark Barnes that will use the lens of history, the fabric of art and culture and the venue of the public square to shine a light into dark places, equipping all with a compass to chart the way forward. The initiative lives in the institutional home of the Washington Informer Charities.



Black women in the suffrage movement (Courtesy of NPS)

No longer are African American women alone in the struggle for Black equality in the United States, said Omar Ali, a dean and professor of the Lloyd International Honors College at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

“Seven years before the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920, the great anti-lynching crusader and journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett had to insert herself into the front of the March on Washington for women’s right to vote,” said Ali, the author of “In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third Party Movements in the United States” (Ohio University Press, 2020).

“Wells-Barnett and other Black women were told to march in the back,” Ali said. “Today, millions of white people have joined the Black-led anti-lynching efforts of 2020. There is a profound cultural shift underway.”

Broadview Middle School

2229 Broadview Drive, Burlington, NC 27217 336-570-6195

Principal: Patrick Battle

Assistant Principals: Jason Slagle, Shanise Goldsby, Clifton Davis

December 15, 2020

Dear Diversity Award Selection Committee,

My name is Aliyah Ruffin and I am an alumna of the African American and African Diaspora Studies Program at UNCG. I now teach social studies at a public middle school in Burlington and I am writing this letter in support of the AADS nomination for the Dean's Award for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusiveness in the College of Arts and Sciences. One of its faculty members, Dr. Omar Ali, has been especially impactful in my life. There is so much to be said about Dr. Ali. I could write about his accolades, status, the many books and articles he has published, his work across the country, or the impact of the philosophy he practices, the pedagogy of improvisation and play. Dr. Ali's philosophy alone has been the foundation of several community groups affiliated with UNCG, such as Community Play/All Stars Project, Monday Play, and Bridging the Gap. It is clear that Dr. Ali has created a successful career yet this is a shallow representation of the value of Dr. Ali's presence not only in the community but in the lives he touches.

Specifically, I would like to shed light on the impact Dr. Ali has had on my life. I come from humble beginnings. Born and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina to a single mother and living in low income communities. I honestly did not know what I wanted to do when I accepted to attend UNCG. I met Dr. Ali during my junior year when I joined Community Play/All Stars Project. I was lost and needed an outlet where I could feel accepted. Joining Community Play was one of the best decisions I have made because it helped to stir my life in a positive direction. I attended philosophical Monday meetings, and actively built relationships with the community of Warnersville, a low-income community, by holding workshops at the main community recreation center working directly with Dr. Ali implementing the philosophy of improvisation and play for people to learn and grow.

Every time I came to the meetings he would have a smile on his face, and greet me. He was so kind and welcoming, without knowing me. Sometimes I would wonder how he maintains his enlightened presence. I would listen to the things he said in the philosophical meetings in awe. I found myself wanting to obtain his aura. Then it connected with me that this is what improvisation and play is about. What I learned about

growth, and development and the correlations between improvisation and play I could use in my own life. After having that epiphany, I decided I wanted to be just like Dr. Ali.

Going into my senior year, I had a more positive outlook on my future. I started to talk to him, and take his advice. He encouraged me to apply to the Honors College and add AADS as a major, so I did. He invited me to a conference in New York City, which I have never been to, and I accepted. He pushed me to present at conferences and I did that as well. He encouraged me to take on roles that I had never imagined seeing myself doing before. My entire attitude about life has changed since I met Dr. Ali. When I am feeling depressed I ask myself what would Dr. Ali say or do and it always gets me out of my funk. He has given me so much inspiration that I am now an educator myself. I teach social studies at a low-income school and every day I wake up and strive to motivate and inspire my students like he has done for me.

If this one professor in AADS has had this kind of impact on my life, just imagine how much the program has done for so many more. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aliyah Ruffin', written in a cursive style.

Aliyah Ruffin

DeAuszlo Swift
6007 Buckhorn Road
Greensboro, NC, 27406
Email: djswift@uncg.edu

October 14th, 2020

Dear Selection Committee,

My name is DeAuszlo Swift Jr. and I am writing this letter in support of the African-American and African Diaspora (ADS/AAS) Studies Program for the Dean's Award for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusive Excellence in the College of Arts & Sciences.

I am currently a graduating senior whose majors are Anthropology and ADS/AAS Studies. I also have a minor in Biology.

Let me begin by stating that I initially did not see myself majoring in African Diaspora Studies; I attended the Middle College at UNCG, a school whose focus is on preparing students to become involved in the medical field; and throughout my highschool years I had cultivated a strong bond with the physical sciences, and was fully invested in becoming a physician scientist. However, in the semester of my graduation, I was convinced to take an African-American History class online provided by Guilford County Schools (other students had continuously boasted of how it was an easy class). I initially took the class for an easy A, but I didn't recognize the seed that was placed, one that would blossom later in my college career.

Upon graduation and within the first couple years of my college career, I had focused on biology classes, familiarizing myself with the Sullivan Building and the many lecture halls and labs in it. In the midst of a college schedule filled to the brim with biology, chemistry, and math classes, I would find the time to take an ADS/AAS course; I had decided to minor ADS Studies. The first course I remember vividly was a course in the arts titled "Topics in Pop Music: Hip-Hop" by Thomas Taylor. Hip-Hop often receives a negative connotation because of the messages evoked from popular artists, but in this class we discussed Hip-Hop as it was intended, as a culture. If one word could encompass my experiences in this class, it would be exposure.

The theme of exposure began to grow stronger from this point; my first year of college was in the midst of the 2016 election season. BlackLivesMatter as a movement had gained momentum, political discussions riddled the campus grounds, and I found myself in a place that I can best describe as ignorance mixed with disorientation. Growing questions of culture, my own culture, and societal contribution began to become more prominent in my mind. I reflected on my experiences so far in the school system, and while I learned of figures like Dr. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Booker T. Washington, I had known very little about themes in literature, the varying identities in the African Diaspora and their experiences, philosophies on equality and progression, many of which should be incorporated into academic discussion but have not been in my experiences.

I began to fear that I would be a man who was well versed in medicine, but not able to comprehensively discuss identities that were connected to my own, nor comprehensively discuss the condition and experiences of the group of people I come from. Even worse, what if in the process of treating someone, I end up hurting them instead?

I would later learn that these fears were justified. Different workshops and academic conversations exposed me to experiences many Black Americans had due to ignorance. Many are familiar to social inequities and lack of legal protection, but examples of Black Americans experiencing malpractice from the hands of trained physicians, or historically being subjected to medical experimentation, or historical scholars that engaged with the physical sciences like Linnaeus and Blumenbach operating on paradigms that placed Africans and their descendants as biologically inferior in the eyes of evolution was disturbing.

I was hesitant for the next few academic semesters, in fear that the transition from the sciences to the humanities might be a mistake, but in the Spring of 2019, I chose to fully concentrate on African Diaspora Studies for the time being.

As I progressed through the classes, I slowly began to see the diversity within the Diaspora. Two of the classes that really aided in this were classes taught by Dr. Hewam Girma titled "Making of the African Diaspora" and "Contemporary Africa." Here I learned how Africa had 54 nations, with over a thousand languages. I learned of the Global African Diaspora the ways people have identified themselves in their respective countries of residence (Brazil fascinated me the most with the concept of moving between races and many living in poorly constructed areas called *favelas*). To learn of movements like the Green Belt Movement in Kenya started by a Wangari Maathai was inspiring. Learning of economic coalitions like ECOWAS and even learning that the Diaspora was recognized by the African Union as crucial to their development in the future.

The process of learning didn't stop there. I have a personal connection to poetry and literature, and I found that Dr. Tara Green and Dr. Noelle Morrissette aided in showing me some of the literary traditions and catalogues of the African Diaspora as well as Black Americans. I had never read *Native Son*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Barracoon*, *Behold the Dreamers*, *Born a Crime*, and other literary pieces that artistically or literally depicted African experiences. I recall a moment where I was assigned to write about my experiences as a writer and how I recalled my budding love for poetry found in lyrics from artists like Kendrick Lamar on early morning bus rides. These experiences became more vivid when I would leave with a group of students during Fall Break on a trip hosted by the Office of Intercultural Engagement known as "The Civil Rights Pilgrimage." One year, we had the opportunity to travel to South Carolina, to St. Helena's Island, where members of the Gullah Geechee reside. The Gullah-Geechee are a group of Black Americans who began to own land in mass after the end of the Civil War in lowland country. Conversations of land ownership and opportunity made the history of Black Americans in the South come alive; I would picture many Black Americans engaging in day-to-day activities during the era of Reconstruction while walking alongside old colonial houses and averting from Spanish moss on the canopies.

In search of truth, I found heritage. It was therapeutic.

This leads me to my presence in the Anthropology Department. As I began to see the presence of the African Diaspora around the world and the many cultures present, I began to ask questions about culture in itself and how it varies on a global scale. This led me to an anthropology class, which in turn led to a pursuit in the major. I steadily incorporate what I have

learned from the ADS Program with what I am learning in the Anthropology program and am now primarily focusing on Biological Anthropology due to my still present interest in science and medicine.

Earlier I mentioned my fear of transition between the sciences and the humanities; this was due to the idea I had of them being separate. The sciences are in theory objective while the humanities are subjective. I have found that medicine operates in the middle; medical practices are based on objective observations but can be used to achieve subjective goals and sometimes methods of treatment for diseases are developed in respect to cultural ideologies. As an aspiring researcher, I found that an academic field that would lead me to this is Medical Anthropology, which is the study of how humans have dealt with diseases in past societies and how past societies developed their medicinal practices. By understanding how diseases, nutritional habits and foodways, various experiences and migrations, environment or cultural practices influence health, I not only have a better understanding of the culture someone may be connected to, but I also have more information on how these factors influence someone's current state of health and how it may influence health in the future.

I mention this because I plan on working with members of my own community in regards to health and culture as a career. In order to help people, you must first understand them, and I now know that with my knowledge of the various experiences and identities of the African Diaspora and Black Americans, accompanied by my anthropological knowledge and my future training in anthropological methods of research, this can provide me with a more holistic foundation that I can build my medical training and expertise on. I would not have reached this point without first expanding my perspectives on humanity, which I did not experience in depth until I fully engaged with the African-Diaspora Studies Program.

In conclusion, I heavily encourage that you consider this program for the reward. It has helped me widen my horizons, and I know it can help others do the same.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

DeAuszlo Swift Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DeAuszlo Swift Jr.", with a horizontal line underneath.

Dean's Award for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusiveness
The College of Arts & Sciences
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

November 16, 2020

Dear Selection Committee,

To begin with, the African American and African Diaspora Studies program has brought and always stressed the importance of diversity and inclusion. I am a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with a major in AADS and a minor in Biology. I am from a small country town in North Carolina where there is not much diversity and inclusion.

Being part of the AADS program has helped open my horizons of different perspectives involving diversity and inclusion. For example, there is an annual conference, the Conference on African American and African Diasporic Cultures and Experience, also known as CACE, that helps bring different types of people from across the diaspora. This promoted event is not only welcome to the students and employers on campus but to the general public as well. This advocates different and new ideas from areas outside of campus life. Within the conference, there are opportunities to bond with other people who participate as presenters and those who are there to learn more. I was blessed to be part of CACE in order to help broaden other people's knowledge, not only of the topics presented, but of myself as well.

Furthermore, I have taken a course entitled "Black women in the US", and on the first day of class the professor asked us to provide our pronouns. This was a good way to start a conversation on what pronouns are and the importance of inclusion of all people. Throughout this course, we read a plethora of works on black women and by black women on different types topics from sexual assault to being trans in America. This inclusion helped me to become more open minded and to simply respect others pronouns. The diversity aspect of this simple gesture helped me to recognize that everyone is different than me through their experiences in life. I am able to use this tool throughout my life.

Continuing on, I completed a course called "Africana Literature," which highlighted different literature and authors within the diaspora. There was a section, during the course, that specifically highlighted African authors and their works. I found this interesting because many African authors wrote about the "American dream". This was peculiar because Americans do not see this "dream" that people in other countries see. In addition, during this course, we read a

book entitled “Binti,” and it was one of my favorites because it showed the imagination of someone within the diaspora. This showed me that diversity is not just about being from different areas of the world within the diaspora or speaking different languages but the power of our imagination.

In conclusion, this program has provided me with new experiences that I can share with others.

I hope this finds you safe and well.

Jasmine Allen

(she/they) UNCG 2020 graduate