Letter from the Chair

SANCOCHO is a mouth-watering Afro-Spanish stew that is the virtual national dish of a dozen nations across the sweeping arc of the Afro-Creole world. Combining multiple meats or seafoods, vegetables, legumes, grains, fruits, starch roots, and savory condiments, this omnibus dish is justly compared to Yoruba òṣọrísọri, Haitian bouillon, Brazilian feijoada, Trinidadian Callaloo, Carolina Hoppin’ John, and Louisiana gumbo and jambalaya. Such is the nature of African and African American Studies.

When we smell and eat sancochos, we literally embody a black Atlantic aesthetic of taste and social order. Like jazz, the sancochos borrow, improvise and hybridize. They simmer in the fire of mutual transformation among elements with diverse geographical and cultural roots. Also like jazz, the sancochos are genius in the creative cauldron of scarcity and duress, re-fashioned by five centuries of Atlantic slavery and settler colonialism, such that there are always more hungry mouths and spirits to feed. Thus, sancochos are rarely intended to feed family and friends for just a meal or a day. You can always botar àgua no feijão, as Brazilians say—“add water to the beans”—to accommodate unexpected visitors.

Sancocho hints at the inspiration behind the new Center for African and African American Research (CAAAR) and behind this year’s veritable growth spurt in the Department of African and African American Studies (AAAS) at Duke University. We represent a stew of disciplines and areas of geographical interest, bringing the analytical concerns Africanists, Caribbeanists, and Latin Americanists together in didactic contrast, mutual transformation, and synergy with the analytical concerns of black North Americanists. Our togetherness nourishes innovative questions and more effective intervention in the African and African-diaspora experience.

In response to the Department’s recruitment of a new chair and to its exciting new plans for growth, the University administration generously funded the new CAAAR under my directorship and committed to the Department 13 faculty lines, of which only eight had been filled by fall 2009.

◆ Next year Caribbeanist and US historian Vincent Brown will be joining us from Harvard. Welcome, Vince! (Page 5).

◆ And we have been authorized forthwith to pursue two additional hires, one of which is in an advanced stage of recruitment.

◆ Under the leadership of Rick Powell, we have initiated a search for the second hire—an assistant professor to be appointed primarily in the Department but jointly with the Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies.

◆ With the co-sponsorship of the Office of International Affairs and of the Duke Global Health Institute, the Center is hosting its first Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Visiting Professor, Adedoyin Soyibo, economist and former Dean of the Social Sciences at Nigeria’s premier university, the University of Ibadan (Page 10).
We hired our first African-language instructor and, with Dean McLendon’s approval, have begun organizing a comprehensive *Africana Languages Program*. The program will be administered jointly with the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. In this project, the Center and the Department are supported by a campus-wide army of stakeholders—including the Duke Global Health Institute, the Duke University Libraries, DukeEngage, the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School, the Concilium on Southern Africa, and the Office of the Vice-Provost for International Affairs (Page 5).

And our current faculty continues to innovate.

With the support of the Global Health Institute, the Department of Cultural Anthropology, and the Department of Romance Studies, we were able to renew the contract of world-famous journalist and specialist in African politics, *Stephen Smith, who will now focus his teaching on enhancing students’ professional skills in Africa-related journalism and social intervention* (Page 13).

As part of the Center’s support of future professionals’ cultural competency in service to Africa and the African diaspora, *Charlie Piot* will be *teaching a joint AAAS/Duke Global Health Institute summer course called “Health, Community and Development in West Africa.”* It will focus on Duke students’ service and participatory learning in the Togolese health care system.

We secured from the Duke Provost, Peter Lange, funding to resurrect the *John Hope Franklin Scholars’ Program*, which guides high-potential secondary school students toward college. JHFS Faculty Liaison *Michaeline Crichlow* has assembled an optimal team of Duke faculty and administrators—including the Duke Program in Education, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership—and Durham Public School administrators to design a new program of unparalleled excellence. It will begin this summer (Page 4).

In January, the Department collectively wrote an excellent *statement posted on the AAAS web site about the tragic crisis in Haiti and its misrepresentation in the US media*. *Michaeline Crichlow* also organized a jam-packaged teach-in on Haiti, with the joint support of the John Hope Franklin Institute for the Humanities and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (Page 7).

The Department and the Center have become center-stage in a range of campus-wide, nation-wide and international conversations.

*Anne-Maria Makhulu and Rick Powell* inaugurated a monthly lecture series that brought in some of the leading lights and rising stars in our field—including *Achille Mbembe, Stephan Palmié, Sylvester Ogbechie*, and *Gladys Mitchell*. Collectively, the invited speakers represented history, anthropology, art history, sociology and political science, as well as Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States (Page 16).

In the spirit of *sancocho*, the Center sponsored a world-class conference called “Can We Talk? Bridges between the Humanities and the Social Sciences,” organized by William “Sandy” Darby and his team. Our co-sponsors were the John Hope Franklin Institute for the Humanities, the Department of Sociology, the Sanford School of Public Policy, the Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality, the Mary Lou Williams Center, the Department of Cultural Anthropology, and the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture. The event was the fruit of enormous teamwork (Page 8).

Under the guidance of Director of Graduate Studies, *Michaeline Crichlow*, the workshop of our Graduate Certificate candidates is operating at full throttle, hosting monthly meetings and presentations by AAAS Certificate candidates from a score of departments across the Duke campus. Moreover, Michaeline is leading us in formalizing and refining the Graduate Certificate requirements.

The Department hosted a *celebration of Michaeline’s new book, Globalization and the Post-Creole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation* (2009). Many compared the lively and well-attended conversation that ensued to “The Charlie Rose Show.”

We inaugurated a twice-yearly meetings of the AAAS voting faculty with our non-voting secondary allies—that is, of scholars with a stake in our field from all over campus—in order to invite their broader participation on Department affairs. The first plenary meeting of AAAS faculty was followed by our *first annual holiday party*. Organized by *Bayo Holsey*, it featured delicious *Kenyan food* and *musical performances by faculty and students*.

Under the intellectual leadership of *Jennifer Brody* and *Bayo Holsey*, and with the technical savvy of *Emily Bahna* and *Oye Alonge*, we established an eye-catching and lively Department website, giving broad access to these intellectual conversations and to the opportunities available at the Department and the Center. It has elicited excited commentary from across the country.

And we have this *beautiful new newsletter*, thanks to the efforts of *StacyNicole Robinson* and *Michaeline Crichlow.*

Indeed, good news has arrived by the flock this year.
Our own Bayo Holsey received tenure this April. Congratulations, Bayo! (Page 12).

Our own Lee D. Baker became Trinity College Dean of Academic Affairs and was promoted to full professor. Congratulations, Lee!

We successfully nominated Mark Anthony Neal for the Robert B. Cox Teaching Award. He is the first in the Department to receive this rare recognition. Congratulations, Mark Anthony! (Page 13).

Sandy Darity, Mark Anthony Neal, and I each hosted one of Duke University’s web forums called “Online Office Hours.” These one-hour interviews are available online at www.dukenuews.duke.edu (also Page 6).

On a personal note, I was honored to receive a distinguished professorship, and I am now the Lawrence Richardson Professor of African and African American Studies and of Cultural Anthropology.

Members of the Department debated many important issues this year, which I expect will have thoughtful consequences over many years to come. We debated concrete issues, such as (1) the sequence of junior and senior hires, (2) the virtues of joint appointments, and even (3) whether agreements made as a pre-condition of my coming to Duke remain valid. More important, we debated big ideas, such as (1) the meaning of “interdisciplinarity” and its importance in our teaching and (2) the worth of internationalism, its implications for our analytical methods, and its role among the requirements of our students.

In the pursuit of answers to some of these questions, we established monthly faculty and Executive Committee meetings at a regular time.

And we established synergy groups—that is, groups of AAAS and non-AAAS faculty and students who will together plan collective research, conferences, publication, filmmaking and social intervention. Two of the most lively synergy groups so far have been “Slavery, Gender and the Atlantic World” and “The Global South,” the second of which focuses on Africa and the African diaspora’s involvement in global south-south economic and cultural transformations. Under the sponsorship of the Center, “The Global South” group will sponsor a spring 2014 conference on the centenary of the opening of the Panama Canal.

Throughout this time and its countless successes, the Department and the Center have received the steadfast and generous support of Duke Provost Peter Lange, Dean of Trinity College of Arts & Sciences George McLendon, Dean of the Social Sciences Angela O’Rand, Dean of the Humanities Srinivas Aravamudan, Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School David F. Bell, Vice-Provost for International Affairs Gil Merkx, Duke Global Health Institute Director Michael Merson, John Hope Franklin Institute Director Ian Baucom, and a score of my fellow department and program chairs, with whom we have planned and continue to plan exciting collaborations.

I have personally received such generous advice from my AAAS colleagues Charlie Piot, Thavolia Glymph and Michaeline Crichlow that they might fairly be described as my co-chairs this year. And, truly, none of our successes would have been possible without the tireless support of Deans Sandy Connolly and Kevin Moore, Administrative Business Manager Susan Ryman, AAAS Budget Officer Connie Blackmore, our Staff Assistant Clarissa Grady, and our Staff Assistant and Newsletter Managing Editor, StacyNicole Robinson. I thank you all and all of my colleagues for making 2009-2010 an extraordinarily fruitful year in the Department and the Center.

I will be resigning as the Chair of the Department at the end of this administrative year. However, I will remain the Director of the Center for African and African American Studies, which will sponsor the monthly lecture series and continue to sponsor the annual academic conference.

Vincent Brown of AAAS and History and Bruce Hall of History will chair next year’s monthly lecture series.

Under the leadership of Charlie Piot and the “Slavery, Diaspora and the Atlantic World” synergy group, the spring 2011 conference will concern human trafficking in Africa and the diaspora.

Next year, filmmaker Dante James will be a Distinguished Visiting Artist at the Center, where he will continue making short films designed for internet distribution about the wealth of African and African-diaspora scholarship on campus.

And the Center will endeavor to host at least one Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Visiting Professor per year.

The Center will serve as an inter-departmental, transnational space for faculty, students and administrators devoted to uncompromising scholarly excellence in the study and service of Africa and its diaspora.

It has been a highly productive year for AAAS. May the momentum continue! Breathe deep and smell the sancocho.

J. Lorand Matory
Chair, Department of African and African American Studies
Director, Center for African and African American Research
This year, the Center for African and African American Research reorganized the John Hope Franklin Scholars’ Program, by shifting its focus from high school students to a cohort of middle school students. We have begun identifying these students currently in grade 5 and plan to work with this cohort over the next three years. These students hail from three Durham public elementary schools with a large percentage of lower income students, namely E.K. Powe, Lakewood, and Oak Grove. The new initiative will kick off its program with a week-long summer immersion that includes an overnight stay, explorations of the Stagville Plantation, and research at the John Hope Franklin Collection at the Duke Library.

The week-long immersion is comparative in focus, and involves spending a week in a history immersion program that will take the students conceptually from a study of the plantation routes of the south, to the lands of Reggae and Salsa, to the diverse lands of Africa. The young people will go back in time to eat, cook, and eat as people did in the early 1800s, look at the original maps and letters of heroes and villains, and discover the roots of various current social and cultural practices.

Stagville offers a convenient door to the Caribbean and Africa. On the property is the Great Barn, a large airy structure built without nails and used to house scores of mules. After a few minutes, you realize this striking barn is shaped like a ship with the keel turned up. It seems the builders had learned their design techniques from boatwrights either in Edenton, NC, or in what is now Ghana. We hope to help unravel this historical mystery using source materials at Duke, in the area, and in Edenton.

The year-long program themed “Slavery and Freedom” will involve the young scholars in reading material like “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” collecting oral histories, visiting sites like the Wilmington Museum to study the early 20th-century Wilmington Riots, interviewing some Stagville descendants, and participating in original research.

The revised program is modeled on the very successful BOOST program. Scholars in that program, now in its 6th year, are identified in the 5th grade, paired with graduate mentors, and encouraged to pursue careers in science and medicine. BOOST is structured around a one-week immersion, monthly programs, and research activities. The year culminates in a spring symposium where the results of student research are shared. Families are involved in the program throughout the year. The JHFS Program is supported by the generous sponsorship of the Duke Provost’s Office.

If you are interested in sharing some of your research with these Scholars, please contact Michaeleine Crichlow (crichlow@duke.edu).

The JHFS program was initiated in the fall of 2005, as a collaborative effort between Durham Public Schools, Duke University, and the greater Durham community. In its early incarnation, and continuing in that tradition, teachers in specific Durham’s high schools identified students whom they felt needed complementary support in order to forge a path of self-reliance, confidence and intellectual leadership. As the 2008 report, written by then-coordinators Darnel Tabron and Alvera Lesane, stated, “many of those students were the first in their family to go to college. Together, these students formed a learning community where students were provided with the tools to become both scholars and leaders.” Franklin Scholars met twice a month on Saturdays to engage with each other in a curriculum designed to be both challenging and inspiring. Participants in that earlier program went from the sophomore level of high school students to college-bound scholars over the course of the two-and-a-half-year program. After successfully completing the requirements,
students received a modest award to help with college expenses.

In its current form, the Program embraces these earlier goals and is supported by an active advisory board made up of Durham Public School officials, members of Duke staff and faculty. But it now enrolls a younger and more diverse cohort of middle-school students who will be tracked until high school. During these three years, students will learn about the diversity of Durham and of the South in general. Students will visit places of interest in and out of state. Ultimately, it is expected that the students will forge links with their peers in the Caribbean and Latin America.

“We are going to do our best to reach out to every citizen of the United States, to engage them in every way possible, and to make certain that they appreciate fully the opportunity which we have to do something not only significant but even spectacular.”-Dr. John Hope Franklin

“Rhapsody in Red: The Legacy of Lagos”

In support of “Rhapsody in Red: The Legacy of Lagos,” a philanthropic project hosted by The Lambda Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Department, and the Center for African and African American Research provided funding for the gathering which took place on February 14, 2010 at the Washington Duke Inn, where 130 guests attended. Since its inception, Rhapsody in Red has brought together students, faculty, and community members in an evening to benefit a chosen charity. The charitable organization benefiting from this year’s event was Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization working in more than 60 countries to assist people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe. Because the outreach of Doctors Without Borders is so vast and diverse, The Lambda Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., requested that their donation directly benefit relief efforts in Nigeria.

The 2010 gala, “The Legacy of Lagos,” focused on promoting the rich cultural traditions of Lagos, Nigeria. Throughout the evening, various entertainment groups provided an exciting blend of authentic theatre, music and art. Seeing an opportunity to really engage the Nigerian community at Duke, we invited Nigerians on campus to participate by either discussing Nigerian culture and pride, lending Nigerian clothing, accessories, pictures and/or artifacts, or helping to organize a fashion show of Nigerian apparel. Djembe drummers provided live and vibrant music as guests entered the ballroom. Ten Duke undergraduate students volunteered to be models in a dynamic fashion show of Nigerian apparel. Djembe drummers provided live and vibrant music as guests entered the ballroom. Ten Duke undergraduate students volunteered to be models in a dynamic fashion show of Nigerian apparel.

The Lambda Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., requested that their donation directly benefit relief efforts in Nigeria.

Vincent Brown, currently Professor of History and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, will join the faculty of Duke University as Professor of History and AAAS in fall 2010. He is a multi-media historian with a keen interest in the political implications of cultural practice. He teaches courses in Atlantic history, African diaspora studies, and the history of slavery. Brown is the author of the prize-winning book, The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery (Harvard University Press, 2008), and producer and director of research for the award-winning television documentary “Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness,” broadcast on the PBS series Independent Lens in 2010.

Joint Venture Between Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill

The New Africana Languages Program

With the support of Dean of Trinity College George Mclendon, the Chair of Duke’s Department of African and African American Studies, J. Lorand Matory, and the Chair of the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, Julius Nyang’oro, have begun designing a joint program in Africana languages uniting the two universities. It will offer a range of African languages, serving the needs of undergraduates, graduates, and students at the professional schools, as well as faculty and staff, with an interest in research and collaborative social interventions in Africa. It rests on the overdue premise that familiarity with Africana languages and cultures is indispensable for effective research and professional work in these regions. The Program in Africana Languages is expected to offer certain languages on a yearly basis, such as Kiswahili, Twi, Yoruba, Wolof, Lingala, Afrikaans, and Chichewa. We also aspire to build an African “languages-on-demand” program, by which a professional in African linguistics and African language pedagogy can, in coordination with a local speaker of a language, instruct any Duke or UNC affiliate who wishes to learn that language. This year, the Department of African and African American Studies hired its first Africana languages instructor—Bouna N’diaye, who will teach Wolof. More to come.
By Camille Jackson, Office of News & Communications, Duke University

On Tuesday evening, [March 16], heads were nodding in a lecture hall on East Campus. But this time, people around the world could tune in and share the class’s energy.

A special webcast of the popular spring course, “Sampling Soul,” set a record for live streaming video at Duke with an audience of more than 10,000 viewers.


While Neal’s students filtered into Richard White Lecture Hall, students of hip hop gathered online to take in the lecture and offer real-time commentary on Twitter. Minutes before the event started, hundreds of online viewers had announced their anticipation on Twitter.

By the end of the night, the number of Twitter postings for the session almost reached 500. Neal said the webcast showed the reach university intellectual discussions can have.

“I have always envisioned the study of popular culture and music as the study of public cultures, so it just seemed a natural fit to make a course like ‘Sampling Soul’ available to a broader public,” said Neal, who moderated the discussion.

“Additionally, I take the concept of being a public intellectual seriously, and the work that Professor Peterson, 9th Wonder and myself did during the webcast is the kind of work that public intellectuals should be doing,” he said.

Many viewers wanted to know if Nas himself was watching. Others were drawn by the celebrity of 9th Wonder. The most passionate online audience members debated the merits of “Illmatic” and Nas’ lyricism on Twitter among themselves.

Tuesday’s class was perhaps the first time a classroom discussion at Duke has been publicly webcast with interaction from viewers through social media. The event demonstrates Duke’s commitment to sharing faculty expertise with a broad audience, an idea that Duke alum Neil Williams, Duke ’06 appreciates.

“I think these live lectures are awesome and a great way to spread knowledge and the Duke brand to the global community,” said Williams who watched the webcast and tweeted comments. “I think alums would love to see more lectures broadcast on the net, as long as the subject matter is interesting.”

Stats for ‘Sampling Soul’ webcast

- 10,044 unique views
- 15,455 views
- 80,831 minutes of total viewing
- 8 minutes average amount of viewing time per viewer

Online Office Hours

On August 28, 2009, Professor Mark Anthony Neal discussed the musical and cultural legacy of Michael Jackson during his “Online Office Hours” on Duke’s UStream channel. Neal wrote the main essay for “Hello World—The Complete Motown Solo Collection,” a 3-CD box collection of Michael Jackson solo recordings released between 1971 and 1975. He is currently writing album notes for a collection of unreleased Jackson 5 master recordings.

Among other topics discussed were diversity in Major League Baseball and the lack of black players and how President Obama’s election provides ample opportunities to advance discussions around race. And why this is an exciting time for scholars of black culture.

During economist William “Sandy” Darity’s “Online Office Hours” on October 2, 2009, he discussed the state of the African-American economy, including the recession and the widening of the racial wealth gap and intergenerational poverty in the African-American community.

Darity, a professor of public policy, African and African-American studies and economics, most recently studied how recessions disproportionately affect blacks and Latinos. He thinks the current recession will likely worsen the wealth gap, what he calls “the most acute indicator of racial inequality.”

Professor J. Lorand Matory addressed the online community on February 12, 2010, answering questions about the Vodou religion of Haiti and other faiths with African roots. Matory, Chair of African and African-American Studies and a cultural anthropologist, studies religions and cultures brought to the Americas from Africa, which include Haitian Vodou, Brazilian Candomblé, the Santería faith of Cuba, the Gullah culture of South Carolina and Georgia, and the Yoruba culture of West Africa. His most recent book is Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé (2005).

Information gathered from www.dukenews.duke.edu
The Haitian people are heirs to a stunningly beautiful culture of collective labor, self-help, spiritual wisdom, musical performance, and indefatigable perseverance. The people of Haiti, their energetic diaspora, and their friends abroad can and must roll up their sleeves and work together for a better tomorrow.

Duke's Department of African and African American Studies commits itself to making the gifts and the travails of the Haitian people a continued inspiration to the entire world. With Haiti we stand united in the pursuit of clean water, nourishing food, life-sustaining shelter, good health care, and freedom for all. At this moment of crisis, we focus our prayers, our donations, and our efforts on saving the lives of our beloved Haitian brothers and sisters.
“Can We Talk? Bridges between the Humanities and the Social Sciences”: A Black Atlantic Perspective

During the faculty retreats that preceded my move from Harvard to Duke, my future colleagues and I agreed to begin this new phase in the life of AAAS with the hire of five “stars or rising stars” in the field. In our collective investigation and subsequent vote, one scholar surged far in the lead of this highly selective pack. This scholar had published the most widely-cited work in his discipline about Africa. On assignment from my AAAS colleagues, I approached what seemed the appropriate department in the hope of pursuing a joint hire, but I did so first through members of that department who seemed natural allies—two specialists in black North American issues. Unexpectedly, they gave me an earful about the inadequacy of the “anecdotal” methods of our “star” candidate and of humanities scholars generally. What my interlocutors wanted in their department were people who did “real”—i.e., large sample- and statistically-based—theory.

The result of this jarring but, I learned, well-precedented encounter was “Can We Talk? Bridges between the Humanities and the Social Sciences,” a conference hosted by the Center for African and African American Research (CAAAR) on 25-26 March 2010. It was the pièce de résistance of our intellectual dialogue this year, enlisting the contributions of virtually the entire AAAS faculty, our visiting scholars, our graduate students, and our undergraduates. Here I wish to summarize for posterity some of the major collective reflections on interdisciplinarity that emerged during this conference, with a particular eye toward the internationalist bridges we stand to build. Even more than the black US, much of Africa and the African diaspora suffers from a dearth of adequate statistical study, and especially of studies sensitive to their non-Euro-American social categories and economic priorities.

Talk about Teamwork

And no one could have built these interdisciplinatory bridges better than William “Sandy” Darity—a leading advocate and teacher of mixed methods. His collaborators included a multi-disciplinary team of Duke colleagues (Mark Anthony Neal, Chandra Guinn, Dante James and me), enterpriseing Duke students (Vanessa Vincent, Jackie Terrell, Courtney Oming, Kameria Listenbee, Colleen Carrigan, and Lauren Lee-Houghton), and the tireless AAAS staff (Connie Blackmore and Stacy Nicole Robinson).

A legion of Duke departments and other units longing to cross the same bridges co-sponsored this conference: the Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality, the John Hope Franklin Institute for the Humanities, the Department of Sociology, the Sanford School of Public Policy, the John Hope Franklin Collection at the Duke University Library, the Department of Cultural Anthropology, and the Mary Lou Williams Center.

At the gathering, 43 speakers—representing virtually all disciplines in the humanities, the interpretive social sciences, and the quantitative social sciences, as well as journalists and a filmmaker—demonstrated their diverse experiments in interdisciplinary research, analysis and teaching and, on the spot, collectively talked out a range of new interdisciplinary options.

Among the highlights of the conference were presentations by 15 of Sandy’s undergraduate and graduate students, who had conducted supervised research on how the statistical social sciences illuminate the study of literature and vice-versa. Equally exciting were the evening showings of selections from CNN’s “Black in America,” “Latino in America,” Lee Daniel’s “Precious,” “The Chappelle Show,” Doug Atchison’s “Akeelah and the Bee,” and Dante James’ “The Doll,” which occasioned an exuberant discussion of the utility of film in conveying social scientific knowledge to the public. We also examined the forms of narrative bias that shape even the most allegedly factual mass-media news coverage. Under the sponsorship of CAAAR, filmmaker Dante James is now making a hip, internet-worthy film about the conference, and culture critic Mark Anthony Neal will be publishing an edited volume about the bridges we built.

While most of the conference participants were North Americanists, many had been born outside the North American racial binary, and several participants specialized in non-US locales. Therefore, some of the most challenging and fruitful after-hours conversation concerned the translatability of North American-style “race”-based statistical analyses into the cultures of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

Complementary Opposites: Social Science Is to the Humanities as the Etic Is to the Emic

This conference richly demonstrated the complementarity of apparently opposite and sometimes-antagonistic modes of analysis, which can be described in multiple, homologous ways: social science vs. humanities and ethnographic social sciences; statistical vs. non-statistical methods; non-fiction vs. fiction; quantitative vs. qualitative; aggregate effects vs. individual experience; structure vs. agency; and etic vs. emic.

In anthropology, this last pair of terms describes the difference between, on the one hand, descriptions that value-neutralize compare one lifeway with another, such as the description of some kinship systems as “matrilineal,” some as “patrilineal,” and others as “cognatic,” and, on the other hand, terms used by cultural insiders to describe their own kin, such as the Yoruba-language distinction between ọgbọn (“senior sibling or cousin”) and aburo (“junior sibling or cousin”). Unlike “brother” and “sister,” the Yoruba emic terms do not distinguish siblings from cousins, or males from females, within the same generation. Unlike ọgbọn and aburo, “brother” and “sister” fail to indicate the relative seniority of members of the same generation. Hence, the emically-recognized kin categories in Yoruba differ in their fundamental logic from the emically-recognized kin categories in English, even though one could, if one wished, describe the Yoruba and the Anglo-American relationships to one’s mother’s-brother’s-female-child-junior-to-the-speaker in etic terms (like “MBD”)—or in unapologetically Anglo-American emic terms (like “cousin”)—that make this Yoruba aburo look just like an Anglo-American cousin. But that wouldn’t necessarily make Yoruba people think of and behave toward their aburo in the exact same range of ways that Anglo-Americans normatively behave toward their cousins.

A parallel could be drawn between the kinship categories and the racial categories that distinguish the US from Latin American, Caribbean and African societies, a distinction that attracted much debate between North Americanists and non-North Americanists at this conference. The debate offered the possible lesson that North Americanists should be careful about gathering statistics based on North American racial classifications in order to prove that North American categories capture the ultimate realities of non-North American racial systems. It is clear that North American-inspired statistics reveal much that Latin Americans, for example, deny about the patterns of their collective lives. But it is also true that North American categories, no matter how well counted, are insufficient to capture Latin American perceptions or the patterns among Latin Americans’ daily responses to and manipulations of them.
Qualitative vs. Quantitative: Double-Checking Each Other

Most participants in the conference agreed on the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative methods. Whereas statistical social sciences effectively present averages, ranges and aggregate patterns, the humanities are free to depict personal dilemmas and, for better or worse, the most unrepresentative but illustrative extremes of any phenomenon, including race.

Collectively we noted that experts in qualitative method can help the advocates of quantitative method to code their data and to take account of the back stories (that is, the politics, the history, and the cultural factors behind any given dataset, such as the divergent classificatory systems of the surveyors and the natives). Humanists can also be highly sensitive to the factors that bias local answers to survey questions, and to the factors that create silences and blind spots in statistical analyses. Humanists are potentially more sensitive to how certain questions prime for certain answers. Of course, statisticians are already a self-critical lot. They are well aware that some techniques of data-gathering are faulty, and that not all of the statistics relevant to a study are equally available. Thus, one must always be careful about making inferences from the available data.

Furthermore, several participants showed, the humanities provide the statistical social sciences with a useful metaphor. Statistics are not merely dead records. They "tell stories." One of the implications of this metaphor is that statistics, like narrative, are always but selectively attentive to the conditions and to the events on the ground. The principle of narrative or statistical selection often arises from antecedent cultural blindness or political bias. Statistics can be arrayed to tell one story or an altogether different one, to imply one solution or its opposite.

On the other hand, everyone also seemed to agree that quantitative data can usefully double-check faulty qualitative hypotheses. Statistical data can also help us to disaggregate the patterns in social life that "race" reveals from those that it conceals. For example, rather than comparing the degree to which "blacks" and "whites" value education, large statistical samples enable us to compare blacks whose parents have a university education with whites whose parents have the same. Such a comparison proves myth-busting: it becomes obvious that black people with any given level of exposure and access to good education value it more, not less, than do whites with comparable exposure and access. And, instead of comparing average white American and average black American incomes, one could trace the correlation between income and complexion along a gradient. The latter comparison has a long precedent in Brazilian studies.

Throughout the conference, however, I wondered how many more variables and disaggregations would have emerged if scholars accustomed to the social ironies of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa had been as well represented in the conversation as North Americans and North Americanists. For example, what questions would African analytics of ethnic and urban/rural inequality and of social networking raise in the face of "race"-based North American data? And how would Latin Americans' and Latin Americanists' obsession with class inequality enter into dialogue of mutual transformation with US North Americans' equal and opposite obsession with race? It is not that North Americanists never employ Latin Americanist hermeneutics or that Africanists never use North American models. Rather, it is that the face-to-face frisson among these habitual ways of looking at the world is too fruitful for it to remain as rare and as antagonistic as it usually is. These black North-black South debates usually take place across long distances. And seldom do the economists and political scientists who are engaged in them meet in the same room with the historians, anthropologists and literati who participate in it. This conference, though, was a propitious model for what a department of African and African American studies should be all about.

The Global Political Economy of Information

A third major theme of the conference concerned the global, or international, political economy of information. First World-based production and distribution networks supercharge the statistical and narrative stories that US Americans tell. Statistics of the sort that our First-World universities, governments and banks can afford to produce seem uniquely authoritative and epistemologically efficient, despite—or perhaps because of—their over-simplification of the social realities they represent. Moreover, various participants observed, statistical "measurement" possesses the power to prescribe what is important and how to act on it.

On the other hand, we witnessed, through fictional films, such as "Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire" (2009), stand-up comedy, such as "The Chappelle Show" (2003-2006), and television journalism, such as CNN's "Black in America" (2008; 2009) and "Latino in America" (2009), the seductive power of narrative and visual imagery. Fictional films like "The Doll" (2008) highlight the dilemmas that people face and their painful but strategic responses in any given historical setting, rather than reducing their behavior to an average or the people to a problem. But empathy, I might add, is always a double-edged sword, as when "Forrest Gump" (1994) managed to create a sympathetic and humane portrait of the United States' role in the Vietnam War.

In sum, multiple presenters observed that both narratives and statistics can be arrayed to require the actions that the sponsors wanted to undertake anyway, or can make otherwise-desirable action seem inevitable. Moreover, the powerful can skip over the implications of any narrative or statistical story, deciding, instead, to do whatever they want. First World-produced film imagery can be just as authoritative and authoritarian as First World-produced statistics.

Statistics in Translation

In a global political economy, various conference presentations suggested, the measurements stipulated in the First World bolster and legitimize commands made to the Third World. Conversely, in order to gain access to the resources concentrated in the First World, Third-World authorities must justify their claims to legitimacy, rights and resources in First World-generated terms—such as "GDP," Euro-American racial categories, Euro-American gender and sexual-orientation categories, and Euro-American kinship categories. In order to survive, Third-World leaders must impress the dominant network of nation-states, multi-nationals, and financial organizations with statistics generated in First-World terms.

For example, imagine an agricultural development agency trying to distribute fertilizer fairly across Yoruba families in any given village. The development agent might ask the head of a household, through a translator, how many "brothers" he has. There is no telling what population the answer will represent, but a wise (or sharp) household head translator, how many "brothers" he has. There is no telling what population the answer will represent, but a wise (or sharp) household head would surely choose to answer in terms of the more advantageous of the multiple inaccurate translations of the term. The answers would be even more unpredictable if the development agent asked how many "wives" the Yoruba interlocutor has, as the best translation for the word "wife" in Yoruba is /ya wo, which refers not just to the speaker's conjugal bed partner but also to the concomitant bed partners of all of his or her father's, brothers', cousins', and sons' conjugal bed partners who have married into the family since the speaker's birth.

Similarly, the cognates of the term "race" in Brazilian Portuguese (raça) and Mexican Spanish (raza) can describe a whole range of human
Continued on page 13

categories, not just categories of descent. For example, in both languages, the police can be described as a “race,” as in Odeio essa raça (“I hate that race [i.e., the police].” The closest logical counterpart to the term “race” in Brazil is actually cor (“color”), which describes various combinations of complexion, facial features and hair texture, such as sarará, for light-skinned people with freckles, frizzy hair, and African facial features. Neither the term cor nor any commonplace term that I know of in Brazilian Portuguese identifies as one category all of the people who are presumed to have African ancestry, or all of the people of European ancestry who are presumed to lack any African ancestry.

Thus, our conducting statistical studies of “race” in Brazil or Cuba would, in an upside-down version of today’s world, be something like a Malian or an Indian social scientist coming to the US and carrying out a massive, statistically representative study that asked US Americans, “What caste are you?” Or a Brazilian social scientist asking, “Are you black, brown, blue, purple, coffee with milk, sarará, Cape Verde, yellow, brunette or light-brunette?” All of these terms closely translate commonplace Brazilian “color” categories.

Some countries have the resources to gather statistics in terms of their own native categories of inclusion and exclusion, but pity the nation that lacks those means. People are always caught helplessly—or struggling strategically—between local categories and categories exported from US- or European-led networks of institutions.

Running into Race

The stories of Nigerians’ first encounters with the categories of US racialism are often comical. For example, one Nigerian Igbo professor in Massachusetts told me about the day that his 6-year-old son came home from school and announced with pride, “Guess what, Daddy! I’m black!” The father furled his eyebrows, retracted his chin, and replied, “What’s that?” The same professor told me that, during a trip back to Nigeria by another Nigerian-American family, their child asked, “Daddy, where are the white people?” An obvious answer might have been: “There are hardly any of them here, so neither they nor their images are important reference points in our self-classification.” But I don’t in truth know how the other father answered.

And here is a further illuminating example. Based upon a survey of selective colleges and universities in the US, including Howard, Massey et al (2007) document that, among students who, at some point in the admissions process identified themselves as “black,” immigrants and their children are, once interviewed, considerably less likely than their native-born counterparts to call themselves “black” and significantly more likely to call themselves “other.” This discrepancy of self-reported racial identity occurs despite the fact that the native and immigrant categories are of similar average socio-economic status and, according to the interviewers’ assessment, of similar average complexion.

These cases may suggest to people immersed in statistics about the widespread and average depressing effects of an applicant’s blackness on the US job market that these populations are simply delusional in their unawareness—or denial—that they are objectively black. But these populations’ contrary understanding of themselves is often reflected in their behavior and, indeed, in their comfort level with white interlocutors and the comfort of white interlocutors (including potential employers) with them.

Concluding Questions

What is the unique contribution of departments of African and African American studies to bridging the humanities and the social sciences? We deliberately bring together scholars from multiple disciplines who are studying multiple, historically related continents. Most of us must also consider the influence of marginalization and oppression upon the populations and phenomena we study. But race and racialization are not always and everywhere the central factor in our subjects’ lives. For example, Jane Guyer writes about the effectiveness with which certain ethnic sub-groups of Yoruba women buy up root crops from the Nigerian countryside, transport them across miserable roads, and successfully feed Nigeria’s mega-cities. One could strain to discover a racial angle on this phenomenon, but no scholar could be faulted for failing. What then is the value added in the interdisciplinary and interregional convergence created by AAAS departments? Which of the analytical models and communicative forms illustrated at this conference offer the richest lessons? And how might we use them to create a more carefully integrated major? How do we wed the humanities and the social sciences in our classes? And is film an ideal vehicle for this wedding? These are the questions that, at the end of “Can We Talk?” left me longing for not only Dante’s short film and Mark Anthony’s edited volume but also the next conference, where I hope we will apply these interdisciplinary and internationalist reflections to the study of “Human Trafficking in the Black World.”

By J. Lorand Matory

Duke Welcomes Distinguished Visiting Scholar Professor Adedoyin Soyibo

This year the Center for African and African American Research is fortunate to host the first of its Distinguished Visiting Scholars. Professor Adedoyin Soyibo is an eminent economist specializing in the economics of development, banking and health care at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he has served as Chair of the Department of Economics and as Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences. He currently directs the University of Ibadan’s Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which, through teaching and research, promotes collaboration between the university and the private sector and the development of entrepreneurship and innovation among staff and students. The Center for Entrepreneurship also seeks to improve the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the design and implementation of custom-built and evidence-based intervention programs.

Professor Soyibo arrived in March 2010 and will return to Nigeria at the end of February 2011. In the fall, he will teach two courses for the Department of African and African American Studies: “Development and the Quality of Living and Dying in Africa” and “A Practical Guide to Social Science Research in Africa.”

Besides teaching, Professor Soyibo will be continuing his current research and seeks to initiate collaborative research on African and African American issues, and on how they can have a global impact. Currently he leads a team of researchers estimating the National Health Accounts (NHA) of Nigeria and is also a co-coordinator of a five-nation Africa National Transfer Accounts (NTA) project. The team on the estimation of the NHA of Nigeria has conducted two rounds of estimation covering the eight-year periods 1998 to 2002 and 2003 to 2005.

Professor Soyibo will also be advising Duke students seeking to conduct research on, and/or in Africa. He has already been able to link one Duke senior with the Office of International Programs at Nigeria’s University of Ibadan, so that she may conduct field research in Ibadan during the summer months. He anticipates promoting better collaboration in teaching, learning and research between the
In keeping with the Department’s practice of celebrating faculty members’ achievements, last year on September 10th, AAAS celebrated the publication of Globalization and the Post-Creole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation by Michaelene Crichlow with Patricia Northover.

The book launching brought out undergraduates, numerous graduate students, faculty and Deans O’Rand and Aravamudan. The audience was treated to a reading of the book’s preface, which amply draws on the image of the cover and frontispiece by Trinidadian artist Christopher Cozier, called “The Castaway.”

As Crichlow put it, the image “conjures movement (a change of place, position, or posture; or a particular instance of manner of moving). The book emphasizes the varied maneuvers of Creole peoples in their articulation and strategic conduct of modern power. Through multiform maneuvers, Creole subjects wrestle with imaginaries of presence that embed bodies in differential structures of power-what we termed ‘mapping the present’ and though laden with ambiguity and contradiction they were ineluctably brought into covert and overt dialogue and contestation with the ideals of citizenship.”

Following that event, the book was discussed again on November 18th, on the Duke campus, at the Decolonial Workshop on The European and the Post-Creole Imaginary.” Since then, the book has been launched, roundtabled or discussed at several international and national academic events, including the University of Puerto Rico, the University of California, Riverside, and the ACLA meeting in New Orleans. It will also be launched at the “States of Freedom, Freedom of States‖ Duke/UWI symposium in Kingston, Jamaica, in June, and at the University of the West Indies at Cavehill, Barbados, in October later this year.

Professor Darkwah was a lively presence in the Department, which, with the Department of Cultural Anthropology, co-sponsored her period of writing and teaching at Duke. On March 22, she delivered a lecture on “The Global Meets the Local: An Analysis of the Impact of Global Economic Reform on Ghanaian Women’s Work.” It addressed the ironic and indeed counter-productive effects of U.S. tax exemption for cloth imports from Africa.

"Many thanks to Akosua Darkwah, a sociologist from the University of Ghana, who has been visiting this year. Darkwah, who conducts research on transnational Ghanaian female traders, has taught courses at Duke on gender and human trafficking."—Charlie Piot

Kwame Zulu Shabazz is a visiting scholar from Harvard University’s Department of Anthropology and the recipient of a Dean’s dissertation write-up fellowship at Duke. Kwame’s dissertation, “Not All Africans are Negroes”: Afrocentricity and the Irony of Africaness in Ghana and Beyond, analyzes how Ghanaian and African-American cultural nationalists invoke and critique anthropological knowledge in order to craft novel ideas about pan-African authenticity. Kwame is interested in understanding how transoceanic movements of people and ideas can help us to rethink the meaning of the US Black Freedom movement.

From Television to the Classroom: ‘The Wire’

In the April 22, 2010, edition of the News and Observer, writer Matt Ehlers wrote an article titled “It’s not HBO, it’s college: ‘The Wire’ as textbook,” a piece focusing on the popular course taught by assistant professor of AAAS and Cultural Anthropology Anne-Maria Makhulu. Ehlers writes, “Makhulu, who specializes in studying South African cities, devoted part of a semester-long leave last year to watch all 60 episodes of ‘The Wire.’”

She realized that the neighborhoods portrayed in the show had a lot in common with the South African neighborhoods she has long studied. “Those shantytowns might as well be the West Baltimore of Cape Town or Johannesburg,” Makhulu said. “They have the same structural difficulties. They are places of grave, grave unemployment and underemployment. They are kind of caught in the trap of how this global economy operates to make certain people not useful to it any longer.”

Students in the class are highly engaged and are easily able to draw parallels in their own lives from the show. Makhulu is able to use the show as a gateway to other topics, such as “race and class and inequality and injustice and corruption and sexuality and sexual violence and abuse.” Says Makhulu, “These are things that can be really tough to talk about, but once you get going, people have an enormous amount to say. Most people have some personal jumping-off point.”

In the class, students are expected to watch all 60 episodes of ‘The Wire,’ complete assigned readings that inform them about what they’re watching, contribute to the class blog, and complete a final project based on a theme from the show.
Marcia Lima, a sociologist at the University of São Paulo, presented current research comparing poverty in the various neighborhoods of Salvador and São Paulo. Her work is innovative in that she uses GIS to map geographic locations of both poverty and racial concentrations. She finds that in areas densely populated with Afro-Brazilians, there are high rates of poverty. In neighborhoods that are mostly populated by whites, there are very low rates of poverty. Lima also discussed affirmative action and cash-transfer programs, such as the Bolsa Família, which rewards families with financial incentives when children attend school. Lima argues that, as a policy program to help Afro-Brazilians in poverty, Bolsa Família is more effective than university-based affirmative action programs, which do not reach as large a number of Afro-Brazilians as the cash-transfer programs.

During the spring semester, the Center for African and African American Research sponsored the Brazil Studies Working Group, initiated by Gladys Mitchell. The group invited scholars studying race and its implications in Brazil. Presentations were held in the Department of African and African American Studies. Edward Telles, Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, presented his current research project. With the support of the Ford Foundation, he is leading a study testing the theory of “racial democracy” in a number of Latin American countries including, Brazil and Colombia. Racial democracy posits that racism is nonexistent in Latin American countries because most citizens are racially mixed. It presumes that there can be no racism without distinct races. This theory has been challenged by many scholars because of demonstrable color-coded inequalities in health, education, and political representation. Nonetheless, the rhetoric of racial democracy flourishes throughout Latin America. Using Telles’ data, scholars can test the prevalence and empirical correlates of this ideology across countries.

Baker, Lee D.
Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture

Promoted to Full Professor
Appointed Trinity College Dean of Academic Affairs


William Darity, Jr.

"Desegregated Schools with Segregated Education” (with Alicia Jolla) in Gregory Squires and Chester Hartman (eds.) The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities. Routledge, 2010, pp.99-117.


Bayo Holsey

Received a National Humanities Center Fellowship and will spend the 2010-11 academic year there.
Winner of the 2009 Toyn Faloka Africa Book Award from the Association of Third World Studies for my book Routes of
Remembrance: “Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana.

Promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure.


Recipient of Distinguished Professorship, April 2010—Lawrence Richardson Professor of African and African American Studies and of Cultural Anthropology.


Robert B. Cox Teaching Award

Nostalgia For the Future: West Africa After the Cold War (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Charlie Piot is taking six students to Togo, West Africa, this summer for 8 weeks of service project internships. They will be living in rural villages and working in local health clinics, among other things, implementing a universal health insurance system, exploring ways to integrate indigenous medicines into health clinic practice, and monitoring the success of a micro-finance scheme.


In 2007 Richard J. Powell was appointed Editor-in-Chief of *The Art Bulletin*, the world’s leading English language journal in the history of art, for a three-year term. Among the many articles that Powell, as Editor-in-Chief, has published in *The Art Bulletin*, two are especially important to African and African American Studies: Phoebe Wolfskill, “Caricature and the New Negro in the Work of Archibald Motley, Jr., and Palmer Hayden” (September 2009) and Krista Thompson, “The Sound of Light: Reflections on Art History in the Visual Culture of Hip-Hop” (December 2009).

The Congo in Limbo / Le Congo dans les limbes, Photographs by Cédric Gerbehay, Manosque (Bec en l’air Editions), 2010 (in English and French).


Continued from page 10

University of Ibadan and Duke University in the near future.

While at Duke, Professor Soyibo will be writing a book on *Living and Dying in Africa: the Role of Development*. The Department of AAAS owes his presence to the joint sponsorship of the Center for African and African American Research and the Office of International Affairs, as well as the support of the Global Health Initiative.
Choosing to major in African & African American Studies was the easiest decision I made during my time at Duke. From my very first class during the fall semester of 2006, a small 8:45 a.m. “Introduction to African & African American Studies” course with Dr. Mark Anthony Neal and TA (now Dr.) Treva Lindsay, I developed a passion for understanding the experiences of people in the African Diaspora. Even more so, I became fascinated with people, places, and institutions that offer valuable information about blacks’ political attitudes and behaviors, but are rendered insignificant and invisible in mainstream narratives. Although I am returning to Duke in the fall to pursue a doctoral degree in the Department of Political Science, my interest in racial and ethnic minority politics will enable me to continue studying the histories and traditions of people of African descent. I look forward to the possibility of future engagement with the Department of African & African American Studies during the remainder of my time at Duke.” –Amanda Boston, AAAS Major

The African and African American Studies Department at Duke University has been instrumental in cementing my desire to pursue a career of the life of the mind—academia. The professors were challenging, entertaining, and very insightful. Through classes such as “Intro to African Studies,” “Culture and Politics in the Caribbean,” “Screening Sex,” and “Post Soul Aesthetic: Spike Lee,” I was able to synthesize different disciplines and interact with my peers of various majors as well. The classes were dynamic and truly embodied what my four years at Duke should be—a vacuum of learning and experience. I have chosen to pursue a Masters in American Studies and will continue to a PhD in American Studies because of the various influences of the dedicated faculty. Although I shouldn’t pick favorites, AAAS is definitely it. Between conversations on welfare, President Obama, Hurricane Katrina, Spike Lee, the Harlem Renaissance, and avant-garde theater, I was always engaged and willing to participate. My experiences in this major have truly been exciting and inspirational.” –Elizabeth Canela, AAAS Major

“Choosing to major in African & African American Studies was the easiest decision I made during my time at Duke. From my very first class during the fall semester of 2006, a small 8:45 a.m. “Introduction to African & African American Studies” course with Dr. Mark Anthony Neal and TA (now Dr.) Treva Lindsay, I developed a passion for understanding the experiences of people in the African Diaspora. Even more so, I became fascinated with people, places, and institutions that offer valuable information about blacks’ political attitudes and behaviors, but are rendered insignificant and invisible in mainstream narratives. Although I am returning to Duke in the fall to pursue a doctoral degree in the Department of Political Science, my interest in racial and ethnic minority politics will enable me to continue studying the histories and traditions of people of African descent. I look forward to the possibility of future engagement with the Department of African & African American Studies during the remainder of my time at Duke.” –Amanda Boston, AAAS Major

“I have enjoyed the camaraderie of being a student in African & African American Studies. Returning to Duke after many years has been interesting to say the least, but AAAS staff, my fellow students, and instructors always made me feel at home. I count myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to sit at the feet of and glean from some of the most renowned scholars in the world and, going forward, I know I will be able to use all that I have learned as I pursue further degrees in social work and divinity. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to any and all who have taught, mentored, or assisted me in my journey. Congratulations to my fellow graduates. Peace, blessings & every good thing.” -Leia Teresa “L.T.” Wright, AAAS Major

“I have been fortunate to experience AAAS classes from my very first year at Duke. I’ve always appreciated the broad scope of AAAS that was not always present in other majors. I could learn about the history of jazz while also exploring the racial tensions in the US and abroad. I had not planned to be a AAAS major, but the decision has proven to be extremely fruitful.”-Jorden Jones, AAAS Major

“The African and African American Studies Program at Duke has provided me invaluable insight on what it means to be a black woman at this institution and throughout the world. In the broader context, it has expanded what I have considered critical to the African American experience and has given me more in depth insight on issues of our Diaspora such as feminist theory, homosexuality within African American communities, dynamics between black men and black women within the context of romantic relationship (and the history of our struggle), ideas of effortless perfection within the black community and the ways in which music (such as hip-hop and soul) have shaped black culture. AAAS to me, though embodying all of these things, has also represented a source of personal identity for me. As a woman of Caribbean descent, I not only have my cultural appreciation for what it means to be black, but I have been able to share my insight and learn from others in order to have a more holistic experience.

While at Duke, AAAS has meant for me a way to understand myself as
well as question my own beliefs and experiences. I have appreciated the opportunity to expand my knowledge of my own culture, but also be pushed to think more about ideas and representations of blackness that I had yet to experience or embody. I have been truly appreciative of my time here (from my first Introduction to African & African American Studies course with Professor Mark Anthony Neal as a high school student in the Duke TIP Program) to my very last course, Sampling Soul, co-taught by Professor Neal and world-renowned producer, 9th Wonder. I am more cognizant of what it means to be a black woman, and I am also able to step outside of this identity and accept, acknowledge and work towards bettering the perceptions that this holds. AAAS has been to me an amazing time for growth and reflection, and I am truly happy that I immersed myself in this experience.” –Cadene Russell, AAAS Minor

“The African and African American Studies Department at Duke has been one that has allowed me to understand the many complexities of racial history and interactions in this country and abroad. I have described the major as perhaps the most interdisciplinary major available as it incorporates the major fields of economics, sociology, psychology, history, political science, and many others, including some of the natural sciences. The professors I have had for my coursework have all been excited about their work and have made me more excited about the field. I initially shied away from the Department as a major because of the stigma that it may not provide lucrative job opportunities in the future. Nevertheless, I continued to take courses and found that many of my interests and passions were in alignment with the goals and the coursework of the Department. My most enjoyable classes have been in the Department.” -Charles Colbert, AAAS Major

Spring 2010 Graduating Seniors: Amanda Boston, Tatianna Mott, Kayla Roby, Elizabeth Canela

Class of 2010 (Spring and Fall): Charles Colbert, Andrew Holman, Jorden Jones, Elizabeth Canela, Leia Wright, Abraham Dukuly, Amanda Boston

AAAS 115G  South African History 1870-Present
AAAS 116  Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies
AAAS 149D  Racial & Ethnic Minorities in America
AAAS 154  Race and Ethnic Inequality
AAAS 156  Modern & Contemporary African American Art
AAAS 187  Recovery in Haiti: Creole for Haitian Recovery
AAAS 196NS  The Age of Jim Crow
AAAS 199.03  Africa, Youth and Democracy
AAAS 100.04  Masking and Power in The Americas
AAAS 199S.03  James Baldwin
AAAS 199S.06  Early American Slave Revolts
AAAS 199S.07  Development & the Quality of Living & Dying in Africa
AAAS 299S  Poverty, Inequality and Health

*This list is not exhaustive

AAAS Officers, 2009–10

J. Lorand Matory, Chair, AAAS; Director, the Center for African and African American Research
Michaeline Crichlow, Director, Graduate Studies; Faculty Liaison, John Hope Franklin Scholars’ Program; Executive Editor of the Newsletter
Wahneema Lubiano, Director of Undergraduate Studies
Jennifer Brody, Faculty Editor of the Website (fall)
Bayo Holsey, Faculty Editor of the Website (spring)
Oyesanmi Alonge, Webmaster
Anne-Maria Makhulu and Richard J. Powell, Chairs of the Monthly Lecture Series
Stacy Nicole Robinson, Managing Editor of the Newsletter
Academic Year 09-10 brought together an array of scholars from a variety of institutions working across borders, regions and oceans to present work on identity, popular culture, diasporic religious practices, art, and history.