A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE INTERCOLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES

by Toluwani Roberts

The national movement for Black Studies Departments began in San Francisco State in 1968. There, the Black Student Union and the Third World Liberation Front wrote a list of demands, which included Black and Ethnic Studies Departments.

When their demands were not heeded, students and their allies went on strike. It lasted nearly 4 months, with faculty and local community members joining in support and resisting police and state troopers. It ended with compromise, after many student leaders were thrown in jail — for months, and even years.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Ronald Reagan is Governor of California
- The Vietnam War is current
- The Black Arts Movement grows
- The Black Panther Party is poppin'
- The Black Power Movement!

A few miles north, at the Claremont Colleges, the Black Student Union increased their demands for a Black Studies Center. The struggle began in 1965 and the demands were formally published in print on May 1st, 1968. After protests and strikes on the campuses, the presidents of the Claremont Colleges committed — albeit inadequately — to establishing a center for Black Studies and Mexican-American Studies. It existed from the Fall of 1969 until 1979. It was not without Administrative issues and challenges during its existence.
In 1979, the Black Studies Center (BSC) separated into the Intercollegiate Department of Black Studies and the Office of Black Student Affairs (OBSA). This separation meant to integrate BSC faculty into the Claremont Colleges faculty—as they were previously kept separate and at a lower status—and to open up access to more academic funding. Later, the Department of Black Studies would become the Department of Africana Studies, now known as the Intercollegiate Department of Africana Studies (IDAS).

John Payton

'Better' Remains 'Bad'

"There's no need for black students to be anachronistic here. Things aren't that bad here," says a white student. A white student who was upset by the BSC.

His concern, or whatever, seemed to center on two issues. First, that student didn't feel that Claremont is a very good place to be the fact, that it is a rather good place to be black. Second, he suddenly felt that his BSU is exci.

"I think we understand the problems well enough. I mean, around here there should be students, there should be student of relationships," someone, you see, Claremont by means of an academic setting, has remarked far from the life of the world. It has indeed, as this warped view seems to go, define the students I'd like. Not only the students of this particular atmosphere, but to understand the understanding of the outside world, much.

The BSU has been in existence for more than a year. Why this new student, so quiet and distant? "I've never been in the position before of being a typical of one, I just don't understand," the white student said. The white students are often ignored; something they were often good, but has not been good in their control, so they end it.

In other words, as long as black students are nice, or so long as white students can be part of them, if it's all right. But when the sterile map, what the black students realize that the black students like being black—that's too far, it's time to find out just what is going on, it's time to infiltrate the BSU and straighten them out. After all, "How liberal are we anyway?"

We now come to the question of theory and practice, of this country and membership in the BSU, it is supposedly one of the circumstances of this country in which the race of men have equal rights. That is not the case. The practice is generally different, though it is the same in all countries, except when one is black. That's really the problem.

It is the theory of the BSU that one must not depend on the race, but rather with the ability of one's ability to find the black cases. It is not the reality of the BSU that the circumstances are for the most part academic. There are not white members of the BSU, and there haven't been through an equal admittance to BSU.

Make no mistake, however, in regard to someone white, qualifications necessary for membership in the BSU are not necessary. For the white person because he is white. Quite clearly, it would require either an exceptional white person or a study in African American to properly identify with some experiences with a black case. Too far, it's time to find out just what is going on, it's time to infiltrate the BSU and straighten them out. After all, "How liberal are we anyway?"

SOURCES TO KNOW

- Agents of Change, a documentary on Kanopy
- The Claremont Colleges Activism Archive
- "Taking Root: Developing the Black Studies Center at the Claremont Colleges"

next page:
"Uncovering the History of the Black Studies Center at the Claremont Colleges" by Dray Denson, SC '20
Black Studies Project
Uncovering the History of the Black Studies Center at the Claremont Colleges
Dray Denson '20, Africana Studies

Researcher supervisor: Professor Maryam Soliman, Assistant Professor in the
Intercollegiate Department of Africana Studies and an affiliate of the
Department of History at Scripps College
Fellow researcher: Zayns Singh (SC '20)

This project focused on the origins of the Black Studies Center at the Claremont Colleges,
which, in 1979, evolved into the Intercollegiate Department of Africana Studies and the
Office of Black Student Affairs. Under the supervision of Professor Maryam Soliman, researchers traced the department's founding
from the formation of the Black Students Union in the early 1960s to the
foundation of the Black Studies Center in 1969.

Researchers discovered a history punctuated by struggle, tangible financial
provisions and institutional recognition of black identity beyond admission. Black
students organized amid threats and bombings. Black students and faculty
pushed for an unbalanced, where they could have courses that were relevant
to their needs and experiences. The Black Studies Center was the hard-fought
cumulation of years of organizing and writing of demands, center proposals,
demonstrations, and community-building. Black students in the 3Cs recognized
the exigency in a movement for black spaces on the campuses, and for a
center where they could learn about themselves away from the
impositions of Eurocentrism, colonial and modernity-centered curricula.

The purposes of the Black Studies project were to understand the becomings of the
BSC and the departments descended from it, and to stitch together the histories of black student
and faculty organizing, and black self-determination within institutions. Researchers
recorded oral histories from professors emeriti, such as Dr. Agnes Moreland Jackson, Emeritus Professor at Pomona College. Researchers also accessed archival materials from
Emeritus Professor Sidney Lemelle, the Special Collections library in Honnold-Mudd,
Denison Library, and OROA, and literary publications in the Claremont area. The research
team extends many thanks to Isela D. Gutierrez, Scripps '90, for her excellent research in
charting the foundations of the Black Studies Center up to 1969 in her senior thesis, "Origin
and Development of the Black Student Movement at the Claremont Colleges: 1966-1969.”

A Notable Event
In February 1969, two bombs detonated on Claremont campuses. One was addressed to a
government professor in Carnegie Hall at Pomona, and exploded in the hands of a
professor, Mary Anne Keating. The bomb caused damage to the right hand, her face, and her
eyes. The other bomb was detonated in a bathroom at Phelan Auditorium on Scripps campus
and, fortunately, no one was injured.

The bombings shocked the campuses and their communities, especially black students,
who were in the midst of their struggle for resources and recognition of black
students. They turned to commemorate the act, and fought for immediate action and an end to it.
As Isela Gutierrez (SC '90) reports, “proving quickly to reassure the Claremont
College that there were as shocked and disturbed by the bombings as the administration”
(Gutierrez '90). Approximately 80 black students evacuated on-campus and off-campus housing in fear of retaliation by a rumoured white vigilante group, possibly headed by Mary Anne Keating's
pupil, who was strongly opposed to Black Studies and the Black Students Movement.
Students stayed at the home of Bert Hammond, a black faculty member in the 3Cs and an
advocate for black students and their movement on campus.

Following the bombing, there was a newfound awareness on the part of the administration
in pushing along the negotiations for the Black Studies Center. In a midnight meeting
on March 30, 1969, dean, faculty, and members of the ISU finalized negotiations for the
Center. Headed by Donald K. Gehr, as director in a surprising appointment, the Black
Studies Center opened in September 1969.

It is important to note that there exists a legacy of violence targeted towards black students,
and students of color in general, on college campuses and in public and private spaces.
Black studies is grounded in a climate of violence that included racial
abuse, death threats, and vandalism as well as the students and the institutions alike,
and regular threats of harm (inclusive of bomb threats). This legacy continues to the present, and the conditions that create an exigency for black
student organizing persist.

The above image is an excerpt from a set of ISU documents, published on May 3rd, 1968.

The Black Studies Center did not exist without tribulations, setbacks, and threats to its very existence. BSC faculty and
black students were constantly pressing for their rights to exist at the institution, and for the tangible and financial provisions
to be able to do so. Funding was regularly under threat, which creased difficulty in the fostering of an autonomous and
unaffiliated center because the Center was reliant on the Claremont institutions for funds to continue programming,
and to recruit and maintain faculty and staff.

The Center appointed 4 directors in its 9-year history: Donald K. Cheek, Dr. James Garrett, Sae Houshans (interim director)
and Kayogu Heyoka, respectively. Cheek and Heyoka resigned under black student and BSC faculty pressures in
response to social changes that were made to the structure of the BSC. Houshans served as an interim director, and returned
to his position at Pomona as Professor of Chemistry at Claremont when Garrett was appointed. As described above, Garrett was terminated for
what the administrations termed as “gross misconduct" after her participated in a sit-in against the budget cuts in the
Pendleton Business programs. Faculty and students at the black student center were appalled by a recommendation by the
Claremont College's Human Resources Institute newspaper, the Center and the Pre-Freshman programs.

Above is an image of Dr. James Garrett, director of the BSC from September 1973 to May 1975, from the
Claremont College's Human Resources Institute newspaper.

The above image is a excerpt from a set of ISU documents, published on May 3rd, 1968.
IDAS
MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

AFRI 10A&B- INTRO TO AFRICANA ST. + RESEARCH METHODS

1 Course in Africana Literature
1 Course in Africana History

1 Course in Africana Social Science
4 Courses in Student's Concentration

1 Course in Africana Art History, Music, Philosophy, or Religion

Senior Exercise (AFRI 191, 192, 193)
REQUIRED OF ALL MAJORS; AND 191 (THESIS), 192 (PROJECT), OR 193 (COMPREHENSIVE EXAM)

- Students are strongly encouraged to spend a semester or a year abroad, preferably in countries in Africa and the Caribbean or other nations with significant Black populations and culture (such as Brazil).

- Strongly recommends that students take 4 semesters of a language spoken in the African Diaspora: Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish, or an African language.

*For the Africana Studies Minor, students are required to complete seven courses in Africana Studies, two of which must be the two-semester AFRI 010A AF, AFRI 010B AF sequence and four other courses that represent at least three disciplines.
INTRO TO AFRICANA STUDIES W/ J FINLEY

This course considers the issues, epistemologies, and political investments central to Africana Studies as a field. We will explore chronologically, thematically, and with an interdisciplinary lens the social forces and ideas that have shaped the individual and collective experiences of African-descended peoples throughout the Diaspora. This course is a broad survey of the history of chattel slavery, colonial encounters,

Unruly Bodies: Black Womanhood (AFRI114)
  J Finley

Hip Hop, Reggae, & Religion (AFRI127)
  Kevin Wolfe

Africana Political Theory (AFRI149)
  Maryan Soliman

(Re)present Africa: Art, History, Film (ARHI141A)
  Phyllis Jackson

Intro to Comparative Ethnic Studies (ASAM056)
  Soham Patel

Deutschland in Schwarz und Weiss (GERM180)
  Hans J. Rindisbacher

Black Aesthetics/Political (Re)presentation (ARHI178)
  Phyllis Jackson
Transformative Life of Malcolm X (ASAM063)  
Soham Patel

Germany Black & White (GRMT180H)  
Hans J. Rindisbacher

Racial Capitalism & Abolition (GWS070)  
Athia N. Choudhury

History of Africa to 1800 (HIST040)  
Makhroufi Ousmane Traore

African Diaspora in US to 1877 (HIST150A)  
Albert Dorsey

Euro Diaspora Americas (HIST135)  
April J. Mays

Women: Power, Majesty, Slavery (HIST140)  
Makhroufi Ousmane Traore

African American Literature (LIT129IO*)  
Derik Jalal Smith

Eye of God: Race of Empire (RLST150)  
Darryl Smith
Fall 2021 Africana courses, cont'd.

Race and Ethnic Relations (SOC035)
Jessica Kizer

Wokeness: African American Social Theory (SOC109)
Alicia Bonaparte

Culture/Hum Dev: African Diaspora (PSYC125)
Eric Hurley

Psychology of the Black Experience (PSYC150)
Eric Hurley

African-American Religions (RLST082)
Troy Mills

Problem of Evil: African-American Engagements (RLST142)
Darryl Smith

Organizing in the 21st Century (ORST198M)
Marilyn Grell-Brisk

African Literature (LIT162)
Marie-Denise Shelton
"The Body is Not an Apology" by Sonya Renee Taylor is a literary reminder of the importance of self and communal love and appreciation. It is a guide to resisting external and internal fatphobia, mysogynoir, and hate.

"Scenes of Subjection" by Saidiya Hartman is an iconic text in which she addresses the parallels between terror and white enjoyment and property value, and explores concepts of slavery and its afterlives.

"The Autobiography of Assata Shakur" by Assata Shakur is a revealing narrative of her role in the Black Panther Party, her resistance, fugitivity, and struggle in prison, and the events leading to her escape. Many IDAS professors have assigned this book and excerpts from it in their courses this semester because it is as powerful and impactful as you’d expect.

"Parable of the Sower" and "Parable of the Talents" are a speculative fiction series written by Octavia Butler and published in 1993, exploring Change, Space, love, leadership, survival, and spirituality in the 2020s. Full of twists and turns from the perspective of the main character Lauren, you may be surprised at how (accurately) the mother of Afrofuturism predicted and imagined our time period.
"High on the Hog" is a Netflix docu-series exploring the connections between food practices of communities and cultures in the African Diaspora. This show will teach you how cooking practices made their way from Africa to the New World, how food journeys from seed to table, and will instill in you a new appreciation for cuisine, whether or not you are a foodie.

Available for viewing on Kanopy or Netflix, "Whose Streets" is a detailed documentary on the Ferguson protests in 2014, exploring the work and intent of local activists and community members, their impact on the nation, and the uprising’s impact on their own lives.

"Summer of Soul" is a musical and colorful documentary by Questlove on the history of Black arts, culture, and history — available for streaming on Hulu.
"My goal is to meet, engage with, and support as many students as possible who are interested in black life, culture, experience, politics—and all else that encompasses the study and love of African descended people!

I am an interdisciplinary scholar who studies black women’s history, performance, and cultural expression. My current research focuses on the performative and political efficacy of black women’s humor and comedy. Specifically, I pay close attention to how various aspects of history, identity and experience influence and saturate black women’s humor."

What is Professor Finley reading???


- **Alice Walker's**, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970)

Email Professor Finley (j.finley@pomona.edu) or drop in to her Wednesday Office Hours in Le Bus Court Rm 113.
Toluwani Roberts
Africana Studies Major
Nigerian Roots
Meaningful Poem
"Won’t You Celebrate With Me" by Lucille Clifton

John West
Politics/Africana Studies Major w/ a Media Concentration
Chicago Bred
Meaningful Poem
Love Poem by Audre Lorde

Album of the Month:
"Sometimes I Might Be Introvert" by Little Simz
Terrence Johnson: Estrangement of Being Without a Name
Sat. Sept. 11 | 5:30 - 8 p.m.
The Athenaeum (RSVP req'd.)

Patrisse Cullors on Social Movements
October 21, 2021 | 7 p.m.
Location TBD
contact J. Finley FMI

Alison Saar Exhibition
"Of Aether and Earthe"
Benton Museum of Art

Contact us at to feature your events:
idas.africana@gmail.com
& follow us on IG: @idasclaremont