Welcome to Diaspora, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies’ electronic newsletter. We are all connected to AAADS in one way or another, yet we are spread far and wide throughout the university, the community, and even farther afield. We are the AAADS Diaspora.

Events and News of Note

• In October, the department held a retirement party for Professor Vernon Williams, which was attended by colleagues, students, and friends from IU and beyond.

• With much help from Nana Amoah, Erica Whichello and Carl Darnell, the department hosted Zeba Khan-Thomas and several other students through the GU2IU program in October. Nana escorted the students all day, Carl took over in the afternoon, and Erica arranged the schedules. Zeba met our students, faculty, and observed several classes.

• In November, the department welcomed Michael Brooks as our new fiscal officer and office manager. Michael was recently elected to serve on the Bloomington Professional Council, which will provide a great opportunity for
Michael to represent AAADS, as well as obtain useful information to share with our faculty and staff.

- **Erica Whichello** has been processing applications for our MA and PhD programs for enrollment in fall 2015. The Graduate Studies Committee will begin reviewing these applications at the beginning of the spring semester.

- The fall 2014 AAADS brown bag lunch lecture series, organized by Professor **Maisha Wester**, concluded at the end of November. We heard three outstanding speakers this semester. The series began in October with Fine Arts Professor **Malcolm Mobutu Smith**’s presentation “Turbulent Vessels: Ceramics and Identity.” AAADS adjunct and English Professor **Jacinda Townsend** discussed the historical research she conducted for her novel *Saint Monkey* on November 5th. On November 19th, **Gabriel Peoples**, PhD candidate in the American Studies Department at the University of Maryland, presented “People Hear What They See: Rumor and Branding in (Re)presentations of Black Men” on the work of Hank Willis Thomas.

- The **Black Student Union** held a peaceful rally on Thursday, December 4th at Showalter Fountain to show solidarity with the families of Michael Brown and Eric Garner and activists throughout the country.

- Professor **Maria Abegunde** and MA student **Hilda Davis** presented their work at the “First Sunday Prose Reading and Open Mic” presented by the Writers Guild Sunday, December 7th at Boxcar Books.
• As director of the Graduate Mentoring Center, Professor Maria Abegunde planned the annual Innovators and Trailblazers in Underrepresented Minority Students in Graduate Education Seminar Speakers Series. Inaugurating this series, Dr. Terrell Strayhorn of Ohio State University held discussions and gave talks at IUPUI and IU Bloomington including his keynote, “Inalienable Rights: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Belonging.”

• On December 12th, AAADS celebrated the end of the year with a holiday party that was well attended by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and adjunct faculty. Special thanks to Erica and Michael for getting the food and arranging the set up and cleanup afterwards, and also to Mary, Michael, and Erica for the food items they contributed. Erica also organized a gift exchange.

• The Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) held their annual toy drive this December to collect toys for children in Monroe County.
The department co-sponsored a number of events on campus, including the Themester panel, “Hot Buttered Soul: The Role of Foodways and Music-making in Building and Sustaining African American Communities,” which was held at the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, October 27, and included Professor Tyron Cooper. The department also supported the Blaxploitation Horror Film series at the IU Cinema; Professor Maisha Wester introduced several of the films screened. In November, the department co-sponsored film director Akosua Adoma Owusu’s discussion and screenings of her short films in Brigance Library. In December, AAADS co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Quincy Mills (Associate Professor, History, Vassar College) at the Schuessler Institute for Social Research (SISR) titled “The Wages of Resistance: Considering the Subsistence of Social Movements” which addressed the economic dimensions of the African American Civil Rights Movement. The department also co-sponsored “Rights and Retrospectives: The Civil Rights Act at 50,” which included a talk by Professor Jakobi Williams alongside IU Professors Dionne Danis, Bernard Fraga, Timothy Lovelace, and Ellen Wu.
• Professors **Grim, Wester**, and **Wolfskill** represented the AAADS faculty at the December 20th graduation ceremony.

**Faculty**

• The IU Soul Revue, Directed by Professor **Tyron Cooper**, presented its 2nd Annual Soulful Holiday Concert on Thursday, December 11 at 7PM at the Grand Hall of the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. Admission was at least one canned good for donation to the Backstreet Mission.

• The Potpourri of the Arts was held at the Buskirk Chumley Theater on November 8th. The Potpourri combines the performances of our three ensembles: the African American Dance Company, directed by Professor **Iris Rosa**, the African American Choral Ensemble, directed by Professor **Raymond Wise**, and the IU Soul Revue, directed by **Tyron Cooper**.
Led by Professor Iris Rosa, the African American Dance Company (AADC) Studio Concert was held Tuesday, December 9. AADC students presented their choreographic projects based on the theme "Confinement". Thanks to Dr. Diana Louis's lecture on the topic of women and asylums, the dancers broadened their idea of confinement and created various sub-themes. In addition, students in Professor Rosa’s A221 (Dance in the African Diaspora) performed Lamba (African) Elegua (Afro Cuban) and Conga/Comparsa (new world twist). Raas, the Indian dance ensemble, also performed. The African American Dance Company will host their 17th Annual Dance Workshop on March 6 and 7, 2015. Please save the date!

In November, Professor Maisha Wester presented "Empire as Soucouyant: Reclaiming the Female Colonial Subject in Helen Oyeyemi’s White is for Witching" at the National Women's Studies Association in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
At the “Race in the Americas” conference held in London at the end of November, Professor Wester presented her paper, "Figurations of Black Queerness as Scapegoat: Intersections of Race and Homosexuality in the African American Community". While visiting London, she also toured the British Library's exhibit "Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination" and worked with one of its curators on research for her upcoming book project.

- Professor **Phoebe Wolfskill** presented “Racial Borrowings and Other Subversions in the Art of Emma Amos,” at the Southeastern College Art Association (SECAC) annual conference in Sarasota, Florida in October.

- In October, Professor **Raymond Wise** served as the Guest conductor for the Unity Music Festival in Springfield, Massachusetts. Professor Wise was also the guest clinician for the Fort Wayne Children's Choir and Voice of Unity Youth Choir Soulful Choral music workshop. He taught a two-day music workshop with 200 middle and high school students, where he lectured on singing in the soulful musical genres, including spirituals, blues, jazz, gospel and R&B. During his visit, Professor Wise was able to speak with several students about AAADS and undergraduate opportunities at IU. On Saturday, November 15th, Professor Wise led the African American Choral Ensemble in performing a concert for the Fort Wayne Children's Choir and Voices of Unity choir. Dr. Wise also served as an accompanist for Dr. Andre Thomas with the 1000 Voice South Dakota All State Chorus. The chorus consisted of one thousand singers from 151 High schools who performed his recently published composition Daa Na Se. He served as the Guest Clinician for the Calvin College Gospel Choir Fall Retreat, and led a full concert titled “Songs of a People” at Fairlawn Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Indiana. In December, the ACE also collaborated with the Singing Hoosiers for their annual Chimes of Christmas Concert. The concert was held in the IU auditorium and presented two shows for an audience of over 3000. The combined groups performed one of Professor Wise’s original compositions entitled "He Brought Joy" under his direction and he performed the opening solo to the finale "Joyful Joyful" from the Movie Sister act.
• Emerita Professor **Audrey McCluskey** published her book *Pioneering Black Educators in the Jim Crow South: A Forgotten Sisterhood* (Roman and Littlefield, 2014) which focuses on Lucy Craft Laney, Mary McLeod Bethune, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Nannie Helen Burroughs and their dedication to educating African American youth.

• In October, Professor Emeritus **John McCluskey** presented a paper, "Creative Arts, Africana Studies, and the Academy" at "Making Art," a conference sponsored by the journal *Callaloo* and Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Professor McCluskey was also a participant at the bi-annual meeting of the Visiting Committee on Libraries appointed by the Harvard University Board of Overseers held October 28-29. The committee monitors and reports on the evolving federation of the 73 university libraries and ongoing efforts in the areas of digitalization, acquisitions, governance, and as pro-active resources for creative and effective pedagogy. In September, WBEZ 91.5 Chicago radio interviewed Professor McCluskey about the literary and cultural significance of the black Chicago Renaissance. This audio interview is available online at: [https://soundcloud.com/afternoonshiftwbez/early-20th-century-chicago-a-period-of-creativity-and-expression-for-black-americans](https://soundcloud.com/afternoonshiftwbez/early-20th-century-chicago-a-period-of-creativity-and-expression-for-black-americans)
Graduate Students

- PhD student Marsha Horsley received a travel grant through the College of Arts and Sciences. The grant enabled Marsha to travel to Puerto Rico in November to present her paper “It’s Like Candy: Teaching About Social Justice Using the Black Female Body” at the National Women’s Studies Association conference.

- In November, PhD student Nana Amoah successfully defended her PhD proposal, and won the 2014 Royal Air Morocco-ASA Student Travel Award. She received her award and travel voucher at the ASA Awards Ceremony in Indianapolis, Indiana.

- Ciara Miller’s poems “Tar Woman” and “From the Hen Your Husband Fetishizes” recently appeared the African American Review. Her poems “In Search of Black Birds” and “How to Make Pancakes” (after the 1934 version of the film Imitation of Life) were also recently published in Muzzle Magazine. Her poem “From the DCFS Counselor’s Office” was published in BlackBerry Magazine this fall, and her poem “Becoming” is forthcoming in Fjords Review.

Diaspora is published bimonthly through the fall and spring semesters. Following the contours of the academic calendar, AAADS issues the newsletter at the end of September, November, February, and April.