June 26, 2003

TO: Paul Camenisch, Director
    Academic Program Review

FROM: Sandra Jackson, Director
      Center for Black Diaspora

SUBJECT: Progress Report, Cycle 4

As of July 1, 2002, the Center underwent a transition in leadership. As the new director, I have reviewed the recommended actions that grew out of the program review process. In the sections that follow, I provide an update regarding actions taken as well as actions planned.

1. **Defining the relationship to the new undergraduate program in African and Black Diaspora Studies.**

   a) The Center shares an office assistant, a new position, with the new program. In determination of the individual's workload and responsibilities, I have met with the program director to discuss current as well as future work. To this end, we have share general plans for next year and have explored possibilities for co-sponsorship of activities.

   During this last year, the responsibilities of the office assistant that supported the Center were comprised of the following: serving as the receptionist, developing flyers and posters for programs and activities, and being responsible for mailing, as well as occasional updating of information on the Center’s WebPages. These responsibilities were quite easily managed along with responsibilities for the new program that involved support of the Program director, working with faculty affiliated with the program, developing flyers for new courses and related tasks. Next year, with the hiring of two faculty appointed to the Program, there will be additional responsibilities related to faculty support. In this regard, the program director and I have met to discuss activities and related tasks to be performed to assure that the workload remains reasonable.

   b) Given the Center’s mission, to promote and support the study of the Black Diaspora in all of its complexities, the Center’s programming primarily focuses on Africa, the U.S. and the Americas, and the Caribbean – their interrelationships as well as their interactions with other regions of the world. The Center is committed to engagement with collaborative, interdisciplinary and comparative scholarship, culture and the arts—performative and expressive, as well as making connections between academic studies of the Diaspora, broader communities and their lived experiences. These foci are closely aligned with those of the new program. Where appropriate, the Center and the program will cosponsor activities open to students, faculty, as well as the broader community. Areas of collaboration will be determined as the director for the center and the director of the program map out short and long range plans. The program director and I have met during the end of the spring term to discuss developments in each of our areas. During the upcoming year, we have agreed to meet periodically, share our plans, and determine areas of collaboration.

2. **Increasing community involvement.** Our major programs have involved invited guest lectures, scheduled in the evening and free admission, to make them accessible to the broader
community. Each of these invited lectures along with our other programming activities have been designed to engage not only the DePaul community but also the broader community in critical examination and dialogue about compelling issues of our time. Indeed our programming has been quite successful in this regard. For example consider our track record. Last fall (October 2002), the Fifth Annual Frederick Douglass Distinguished Lecture, “The Historical Construction of Racism: A Comparison of White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism,” delivered by George M. Fredrickson (Stanford University) attracted an audience of several hundred. The Fourth Annual Frederick Douglass Distinguished Lecture (October 2001), “Race, Citizenship and Human Rights in the New Millennium,” delivered by Julian Bond, chairperson of the NAACP, attracted an audience of over five hundred. In May 2002, Richard Delgado, the Third Annual Frantz Fanon Distinguished Lecturer, who spoke on “Frantz Fanon’s Anticolonialism,” also attracted an audience of several hundred as well. In May 2000, Ali Mazrui, Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities, Binghamton State University of New York, presented “Reframing the Complexities of Identity in the Black Diaspora,” to an audience of over 400. Patricia Williams, the Distinguished Frederick Douglass Lecturer in October 2000, delivered a talk on “Race, Gender and Justice in America” to an audience of over 450. Previously, Dr. Cornel West, the Frederick Douglass Distinguished Lecturer for 1999, delivered a talk, “Race, Justice, and Freedom in the 21st Century,” attracting an audience of approximately 1,000. More recently, the two-day conference (April 4 and 5, 2003) organized by the Visiting Fellow in the Center, attracted over 250 individuals, inclusive of scholars and performers whose work focuses on Abakua rituals and traditions not only in Nigeria, but also the Caribbean and the U.S. A number of individuals from related communities were in attendance.

Our goal is to sustain as well as increase this outreach. To further increase community outreach, the Center will need additional funding and staffing. As we know, the Center’s director, administers the Center part-time, and also works as a faculty member. The Center’s Assistant Director serves as the office manager. The shared office assistant is the only additional staff member of the Center. This staffing pattern is inadequate to support additional community outreach efforts.

Specifically regarding enhancement of staffing in the Center, the Dean has agreed to the hiring of a one-year position that has teaching and grant writing responsibilities. This position has been posted and the search is underway. We are intending to fill the position by September 2003. The individual who fills this position will work closely with the Director of the Center as well as with the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research in identifying potential funding sources and developing proposals.

3. Development of a Funding Plan. The Center is committed to seeking external funds to expand its activities. During this last year the Director, Professor Sandra Jackson, and a colleague, Professor Fassil Demissie (Public Policy Studies), co-authored an Illinois Humanities Council Proposal for a major grant in the amount of $10,000 that was awarded to support a yearlong film and colloquium, “Reel Images and Cinematic Representations of the Black Diaspora.” The director plans to write additional grants. The individual who fills the one-year position is also expected to assist in the development of a funding plan and write grants as well.

4. Development of an Assessment Plan. The Center continues to produce an Annual Report that it shares with the Dean and members of the Center’s Advisory Board. Each year, we have assessed the success of our activities and programming by reviewing mailing lists—updating them and targeting them to specific audiences, tracking the number of participants, reviewing expenditures and yield regarding newspaper ads and making decisions regarding whether or not to continue to place ads and where.
For the upcoming year, we will review one of our activities and assess it in light of its goals. Very likely, we will review the Student Scholars Essay Contest, which has been conducted annually for the last five years. Each year, in addition to recommending award winners, the members of the essay contest committee have provided feedback regarding the quality of essays, the successfulness of the prompt, as well as ways to sustain as well as increase student participation. This year I have discussed assessment of this activity with the committee and they will be meeting in the fall to assist me in developing an assessment plan regarding this activity.

C: Michael Mezey, Dean College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
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