

To: University Faculty Senate

From: Tony Seraphin, Member, UGS

Steven M. Eidelman (Highlighted in yellow where I had something to add)

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2013

RE: Permanent Status Program Review of Black American Studies Major —Evaluation Report.

### Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

1. Does the major/program meet its originally stated goals and objectives?

Yes -- There is strong evidence to show that the program has met its original

Goals which were initiated by the 1968 spring occupation by the Black Student Union of

the Student Center, and culminated in departmental status in fall 2010. There is also strong support from relevant departments and, apparently, strong student interest.

- There is strong support from relevant departments that BAMS shares faculty with as the letters of support in the proposal make clear: Departments of History, Sociology and Criminal Justice, Anthropology, Political Science and International Studies, Biological Sciences, Psychology, Art History, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, and English. This support includes co-sponsored programs, lectures, or other events that meet the educational missions of our departments. It also means that many of our joint faculty cross-list courses with our department so that our majors and minors have the opportunity to extend their interdisciplinary reach into these units (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American Studies)

2. Is the major/program compatible with the Academic Priorities of the University?

Yes, the BAMS major is compatible with the academic priorities of the University

because "it aims to provide systematic discovery based opportunities for students to:

- Acquire broad and basic knowledge of the experiences of people of African ancestry as it relates to the North American, global and diasporic influences that impact their lived experiences through multidisciplinary inquiry and analysis in Arts/Humanities, Social/Behavioral Science, and History.
- Develop critical thinking and research skills that promote collaborative study.
- Conduct comparative analyses of the human experience across the African Diaspora and of other ethnic/racial/cultural experiences.
- Acquire personal experiences in diasporic cultural settings outside of the United States through study abroad programs and/or settings outside the classroom.
- Conduct a major scholarly project of independent research that culminates in a senior thesis and/or project.

- Appreciate interdisciplinary study in ways that foster lifelong learning.
- To acquire through courses and other activities, writing and public speaking skills; qualitative skills using computers and other technical devices to solve problems; and to participate in sustained academic study that recognizes one’s social and civic responsibilities to one’s community—indeed the world.”

3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this major/program?

➤ “BAMS offers a thirty-one-credit major that begins with a three-credit introductory survey course in Black American Studies [BAMS 110], a three-credit course on the History of Africa [BAMS 134], and culminates in a three-credit capstone course [BAMS 490] that requires a research/scholarly/experiential senior project that is presented publicly amongst faculty, students, and parents. In between, we offer a choice of courses at the sophomore level on African American Culture or Contemporary African American Issues [BAMS 205 or 206], and at the junior level on the History of Black America to the Civil War or since + the Civil War [BAMS 304 or 306]. We also require a four-credit course in research and analytical methods that offers a multidisciplinary perspective on the varied methods and/or methodologies concerning Black American Studies [BAMS 391]. The curriculum is designed for maximum flexibility so that students may easily pursue double majors or other minors. I believe that many students would welcome the opportunity both for double majors as well as minors. Many of our BAMS majors do double major (the majority of our BAMS majors do), and our minors have the opportunity to complete their minor studies in one and X years if they take two BAMS courses per semester (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American studies). We recognize that many students feel that traditional programs of study leading to recognizable jobs or advanced study or professional preparation are essential to their career opportunities. We believe that BAMS can support any of these objectives and has the added advantage of providing a focus for critically examining and understanding the experience of persons of African ancestry in the United States and throughout the Diaspora. To support this flexibility we have organized the major in the following way:

- A. General Major: If students chose to receive a general major in BAMS, they must take the required nineteen credits of courses listed above, and an additional twelve credits—one course from each of the following four main areas (we have termed pillars):
- Comparative and Diasporic Studies (Caribbean; Africa; South America; International Relations),
  - Arts and Humanities (literature; art and art history; visual studies; philosophy and so on)

- Social and Behavioral Sciences (political science; sociology; criminal justice; psychology; urban affairs) I would like to see Human Development and Family Studies in here as well. Several courses are relevant including HDFS 202 DIVERSITY AND FAMILIES; HDFS 230 FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES
  - Discusses community context of family life and interface of family with school, community and work settings. Community development, social capital, collaboration, family and community asset building, and opportunity structure analysis approaches presented. HDFS 402 CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY
  - Provides historical overview of family and child policy in United States, including policies toward children and families in poverty. Role of economy, politics, race, class, gender, legal and advocacy issues discussed.
- Concerning the Social and Behavioral Sciences pillar of the BAMS major: we have shared a connection with Human Development and Family Studies (although not in a formal way as we have other departments) for a number of years. When Dr. Nyasha Grayman was here at UD (over five years ago—in winter 2007), she and Dr. Norma Gaines-Hanks taught courses in the winter term that were cross-listed with BAMS. Students (BAMS majors and minors) were also given major and/or minor credit for these courses. Dr. Grayman-Simpson no longer teaches at UD, but Dr. Gaines-Hanks does (she has taught classes with Dr. Francis Kwansa, professor of hotel, restaurant and institutional management), and Dr. Gaines-Hanks' study abroad courses are still accepted courses in our major and minor. In the future, we are open to building upon this relationship in more concrete ways by emphasizing HDFS course offerings in the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of the major. Ironically, this spring, we have a graduating BAMS minor, Totiyana Evans, who is a HDFS major. She has been admitted to a MSW program at University of Pennsylvania for the fall, 2013 (she is still awaiting word from the other graduate programs she has applied to). I was one of her recommenders. Thus we hope to continue this trend and build upon these connections in more formal ways (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American studies).
- Examination of diverse families in United States with emphasis on issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Focus on effects of demographic, historical and social changes.
  - History (African American; Caribbean and/or African history)
- B. BAMS major with a concentration: If students chose to receive a BAMS major with a concentration, they must take the nineteen credits listed in the opening paragraph above and a nine credit sequence that provides a flexible way to obtain a more focused program of study in either Black Gender Studies; Black Art, Literature, and Culture; Social Justice, Law and Public Policy. To complete the major, students must take one additional elective course from an approved list of courses.
- C. The BAMS major will broaden the array of courses meeting the multicultural requirement and as noted in the letter from the admissions office, will expand the recruitment of African American students to the

University, and provide support for those other students who have a strong desire to have a broader multicultural education. The courses that meet the BAMS major meet a variety of educational goals of the University and the College of Arts and Sciences:

- Multicultural Requirement = 29 courses
- Second Writing requirement = 7 courses
- Breadth—Group A = 4 courses
- Breadth—Group B = 10 courses
- Breadth—Group C = 3 courses”

### Impact and Demand

1. Describe any significant impact the proposed curricula might have on other instructional, research, or service programs of the University.
  - “The interdisciplinary trend of most students in BAMS: History, English, Women’s Studies, Sociology and Criminal Justice, Political Science and International Relations, Psychology, Urban Affairs and Public Policy, Art/Art History, Communications, and Philosophy. BAMS has strong connections to all these departments, and creates programmatic opportunities that benefit majors/minors from each unit.” However, this program is within one college only. Are there not courses in other colleges that could be of benefit to potential students? Is this an artifact of RBB?
  - Although our program resides in one college, we are making attempts to broaden that scope. We are in talks with the College of Health Sciences to develop a concentration on Race in Science and Medicine in BAMS that would allow us the opportunity to examine health care disparities in underserved communities that include people of African and Latin ancestry. As we build that connection, and strengthen the connection to the College of Education and Human Development, we will allow our students broader access to a myriad of programs on campus. But we are also mindful that the academic demands on students in other colleges may impede this progress, but we are hopeful that we can come to an amendable resolution for all involved (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American Studies).
2. Are the admissions requirements for this major/program clearly stated and fairly implemented?
  - Yes. “BAMS offers a thirty-one-credit major that begins with a three-credit introductory survey course in Black American Studies [BAMS 110], a three-credit course on the History of Africa [BAMS 134], and culminates in a three-credit capstone course [BAMS 490] that requires a research/scholarly/experiential senior project that is presented publicly amongst faculty, students, and parents. In between, we offer a choice of courses at the sophomore level on African American Culture or Contemporary African American Issues [BAMS 205 or 206], and at the junior level on the History of Black America to the Civil War or since the Civil War [BAMS 304 or 306]. We also require a four-credit course in research and analytical methods that offers a multidisciplinary perspective on the varied methods and/or methodologies concerning Black American

Studies [BAMS 391]. The curriculum is designed for maximum flexibility so that students may easily pursue double majors or other minors. We recognize that many students feel that traditional programs of study leading to recognizable jobs or advanced study or professional preparation are essential to their career opportunities. We believe that BAMS can support any of these objectives and has the added advantage of providing a focus for critically examining and understanding the experience of persons of African ancestry in the United States and throughout the Diaspora.”

3. Is there sufficient demand for this major/program to warrant granting it permanent status? Are enrollments strong?

➤ Yes. “Our original projection that we would have an estimate of 20 majors in the initial stages of the offering has been pretty accurate given the number of students that have matriculated through the program—and now department—since BAMS has offered a major. Normally, it would take a full cycle (four years) for us to produce graduates for the major, but we had students so dedicated to the educational mission of BAMS that we were able to hold our first convocation in May 2008. We had 4 students participate in that convocation ceremony (see attached newsletter). Since that time, we have held convocation ceremonies in the Roselle Center for the Arts (Puglisi Hall) where we have graduated as few as 3 undergraduate students, and as many as 6 undergraduate students in one ceremony. In 2013, we are projected to graduate 12 BAMS majors—3 in the winter 2013 and 9 in the spring 2013. Many of our majors are double majors, but we have graduated students with BAMS as their primary field of student.” **If this program is marketed well to potential students the likelihood of the number exceeding 20 majors should be readily attainable.**

▪ **Once our major and the changes in the minor have been approved, we plan to put a marketing strategy in place that speaks of all the benefits of the major, the successes of our majors and minors (we are currently developing a new website that will help facilitate this process), and our outstanding faculty are some of the biggest advocates for the major and minor. With the changes in the minor (which makes it easier for students to complete the minor in 1 and 1/2 years), I believe our student numbers will grow as the visibility of the department grows. We teach a great number of students as our courses meet the multicultural requirement, College and/or University group requirements, and second writing requirements. We will continue to promote the benefits of the BAMS major and minor** (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American Studies).

4. Do the students in the major/program receive appropriate advising and mentoring?

➤ Yes. “Students who join our department are given academic advisors. These advisors are available to meet with students upon request, and we also provide an opportunity for our students to speak about their career goals with their advisors. Our department also provides informal informational sessions, as needed, to help students successfully progress through the major. We encourage

outstanding students to develop senior theses in their specialty fields in Black American Studies. Furthermore, we conduct informative career development sessions to encourage our majors to pursue graduate school, and we chart the process for successfully applying to graduate school. Recently, we held a luncheon where graduate students could speak with our majors about the realities of graduate school life.”

5. Does the major/program require additional student expenses beyond the traditional books and supplies, such that additional need for financial aid can be expected?
  - No
6. Does the program have the support of departmental and affiliated faculty?
  - Yes, there is very strong and enthusiastic support from departmental and affiliated faculty, such as Political Science and International Relations, English, Art History, Admissions, and UD Library. Had we been asked for support I am certain it would have been given, assuming that courses from HDFS were listed.
    - We will work at strengthening our alliances to the College of Education and Human Development (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American Studies).
7. Are resources available to support and maintain the program/major?
  - “There are no specific resource needs to implement the program and there are no specific new budgetary needs.”

## Evaluation

1. Does the major/program address any of the ten goals of General Education at the University (question for undergraduate programs only)?
  - Yes, the program was designed with the UD’s ten General Education goals in mind. The connected is clear and well articulated.
    - We are very proud of the placement of BAMS majors and minors in a myriad of industries within and outside of the academy. Some of our majors are teachers, community and non-profits directors, and business leaders. Most of our students have gone on to graduate school- one of our BAMS majors double-majored in Chemistry and BAMS and is in medical school at Brown University. We have another BAMS major who has passed his qualifying exams for a PhD in History and is now working on his dissertation at Indiana University, Bloomington. Our graduates have gone on to other graduate programs at Duke University, Rutgers University and University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. Our BAMS triple major (Women Studies and Sociology) graduated in three years, earned a MA at Temple University, and now has a full, five-year fellowship at Rutgers University as a Ralph Bunche Fellow in the department of Sociology. This year we have BAMS majors and minors who were admitted into some of the top graduate programs in the country with fully funded fellowships attached. We also had one BAMS minor admitted to over 8 law schools...and many with funding. We do not see this trend abating. If anything, it will grow exponentially as our program matures into its department status. Having just become a department in 2010, I feel it is important to note the work that has already been done to assure students that a major in Black American Studies is noteworthy, and, like any other major on

campus, can teach you wonderful things about yourself and the world in general-not to mention the stellar academic skills that come with being a BAMS major! Our students will be some of our greatest advocates (Dr. Carol Henderson, Chair, Dept. of Black American Studies).

2. Has the major/program clearly delineated the knowledge, values, skills, and other learning outcomes that their graduates will be expected to have acquired?
  - Yes.
  - Agreed
  
3. Has the major/program implemented a plan to evaluate and assess the learning outcomes of its students?
  - Yes.
  - Agreed
  
4. Please comment on completion and job placement of students who completed the program/major.
  - Although preparing students for specific employment opportunities is not a key objective of the program, however, the BAMS “department works hard to provide information on academic and employment opportunities for our students. We counsel with them individually to find out their career goals. We conduct professional and career development roundtable discussions to help BAMS majors develop a plan to achieve their career goals. We help them with the graduate school process, and in some instances, we recommend students go to UD’s Career Services if they want to explore other career options, find an internship or summer employment. BAMS also has a Major Resource Kit with Career Services that explains what type of entry level jobs are available for BAMS majors, and more importantly, what type of employers hire BAMS majors. Many of our students double major so we work jointly with them to chart the best career path that utilizes their technical and academic skills.” I would anticipate that many of the graduates would be well prepared for graduate study in everything from Law to American Studies to Political Science and Sociology among other areas.

#### **Additional Comments**

Please add any observations or comments you may have about this major/program.

- I believe that the program is on extremely strong footing and rightfully deserves permanent status.
- I concur. As the parent of a student, now graduated, who took three courses in the BAMS program, I know he was engaged by faculty, challenged by the material and enlightened about the role of Black Americans in the development of our country.