Faculty, friends, alumni, and affiliates, welcome to the Program in African & African American Studies (AAAS) 2012 Newsletter! Within this publication you will find information on some of our exciting 2011-2012 AAAS events. This year we continued our yearlong celebration commemorating the anniversary of the 100th birthday of Dr. Saint Clair Drake, who was the first AAAS Director back in 1969. We celebrated his life and legacy with alums during homecoming/reunion weekend and ended this celebration with a dynamic St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture on this year’s Race Forward topic “Race & Education” delivered by a living legend, Professor Angela Davis. Prior to this lecture we hosted a lecture series, bringing speakers from all over the country to share their research, theories and experiences with our students and community, emphasizing the continued need to examine race in our education system. These are just a few of the many exciting events we hosted this year. Please join us in celebrating 2012, another year in the continuing legacy of excellence that is Stanford’s Program in African & African American Studies!
Learning about the Diaspora through the Arts

Each year AAAS purposes to take its majors and minors off campus to experience African & African American expressions in the arts. This year we capitalized on our close proximity to San Francisco and planned an evening for our majors, minors and faculty to share at the theater together. However, the idea to simply attend a performance of the award winning show “Fela!” blossomed into a number of exciting events co-sponsored with the Institute for Diversity in the Arts (IDA). Together we hosted a lunch conversation with Fela! star, actor Sahr Ngaujah. He shared his experiences and insights about his role as Fela Kuti and the creative process he and his cast mates underwent to bring this production to life. This lunch was open to the larger Stanford community and allowed our students to learn more about the production before attending the performance. Following the show we had the opportunity to meet the entire cast and learn even more from the other actors, singers and dancers. In Stanford fashion one of our majors, Jessica Anderson, capitalized on this opportunity and started conversations with a few cast members, which led to their hosting vocal and dance workshops on Stanford’s campus. The workshops were open to the entire Stanford community. To learn more about what this opportunity meant to sophomore Jessica Anderson please read her reflection on the following page.
Reflecting on Fela!

By Jessica Anderson '14

FELAI is the Tony Award winning musical that tells the story of the Nigerian artist and activist Fela Kuti. The African & African American Studies Department sponsored a trip for majors, minors, and affiliated faculty to see the production while it was running in San Francisco. For many audience, the story of Fela Kuti’s life presented enough wonderment to satisfy viewers the whole night. But what struck me the most was the way in which Fela’s story was artistically approached.

FELAI interacts with audiences as if they were in a dance hall instead of a theater, extending the bounds of the stage and making it inclusive to all who step inside the room. Creators strategically take the musical theater genre, a genre whose historical trajectory has excluded people of color for decades, and transform it into a collaborative club-like dance hall. This show reinvents spaces that were once based upon exclusion as a device for performance and makes them inclusive for not only the sake of enjoyment but also accuracy. Because on a larger scale, inclusion draws a more accurate picture of what Fela’s work was all about. FELAI manages to include audiences through song, dance, lighting, set design, costume, and acting that altogether creates a production so overwhelmingly beautiful that audience members are provoked to both dancing and tears.

Since audiences are made into participants, these same people who originally were onlookers become victims of oppression, activists for equality and humanity, and lovers of life like Fela and countless other Nigerians whose stories are captured in the show as well. In that experience, audiences can easily identify and sympathize with Fela Kuti and Nigeria’s struggle. But they can also then recognize the parallels between the battle for human rights on both Nigerian and American soil. They can see the global implications of Kuti’s life and encounters with imperialism.

But this inclusion was not only embodied through staging and show design; inclusion was exercised even through FELAI’s selection of music genre and form. The show juxtaposes Kuti’s original songs against the operatic voice of Melanie Marshall (Funmilayo), whose extensive classical training shines through every note she sings. And during the underworld sequence of the show another musical styling is added. Audiences are overwhelmed by the traditional Guinean vocal stylings of Ismael Kouyate. In this moment of the show, audiences hear the contemporary Nigerian afrobeat stylings of Kuti, the classical melodies of Marshall, and the traditional tribal sounds of Kouyate. Bringing together styles indicative of the various times, locations, and peoples represented in the show this moment is the epitome of aesthetic inclusion.

Somehow the inclusion only got better by the end of the show. The entire cast came out to greet Stanford students and faculty. What we found was a group of artist-activists who were passionate about their artistic practice but also dedicated to social justice. For artist-scholar-activists like many of the Stanford guests and myself, we found this moment even more inspiring. Because it was proof that one can balance both art and activism in their professional pursuits. FELAI gave us a passion, inspiration, and encouragement in our social, academic, artistic, and professional endeavors.

FELAI is a show that highlights the life of a man who dedicated his life and artistic practice to social justice. But FELAI also situates this man in the larger context of Nigerian history, and ultimately world history. And it does so by incorporating everyone in the space into the experience. Kuti is elevated from a man into a symbol of the fight for justice. And every time audiences are drawn into his story, they are motivated to fight for justice too. So why does inclusion as an aesthetic device even matter? Because ultimately inclusion is not just something Nigeria should be fighting for.
Celebrating

Dr. Saint Clair Drake

2011 Homecoming panel discussion:
“Celebrating the Legacy & Impact of Dr. St. Clair Drake”

2011 marked the 100th anniversary of Dr. Saint Clair Drake’s birth, presenting a wonderful opportunity to celebrate his life, legacy and impact on AAAS. We kicked off our yearlong celebration at the 2011 St. Clair Drake Memorial lecture, which was delivered by Dr. Mae Jemison. We continued the celebration this year by hosting a panel of Dr. Drake’s former students, Dr. Joyce King and Dr. Grace Carroll, AAAS alum, Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace, and current AAAS student, Matthew Miller, to discuss the impact of his research, mentorship and life. Former students of Dr. Drake, Dr. Carroll and Dr. King spoke personally about how Drake influenced their research. Dr. Burns-Wallace discussed the significance of Drake’s approach to looking at African and African American Studies from a more global perspective. Lastly, senior Matthew Miller spoke about the relevance of Dr. Drake’s scholarship and the relevance of still examining race in the 21st.

Below Matthew Miller reflects on the significance of Drake’s work to his own scholarship and career goals.

In my experience at Stanford, the legacy of Dr. St. Claire Drake has yet to be fully realized among the humanities and the social sciences, which gives justification for continued celebration in 2012 and beyond. I can confidently say that because his work was not taught to me in an urban studies or planning course, though a thorough examination of his seminal text “Black Metropolis” would point otherwise. For example, when I read about “Bronzeville” in Part III, which separated the city of Chicago into a geographically graded “Ecological Areas Within Negro Community As Defined in 1920 and 1930,” I smiled at that synergistic moment of accomplishment; I had found a crucial link between my major of Urban Studies/Planning and minor in AAAS.

By analyzing the state of community infrastructure in broad strokes (“Best Areas” to “Worst Areas”), Drake suggested that one responsibility of future urban policymakers, designers, and scholars is to deliver what we now call “livability” for predominantly Black built environments. Why these spaces? He writes in his last few paragraphs on page 787 that when you address “the Negro problem” of socioeconomic marginalization as “an integral part of...the whole complex of problems in the larger American civilization,” you solve the multiracial issue of marginalization in the multicultural American social, economic, and (I would add) environmental economy. Thus, Black Metropolis is still a powerful manuscript for social change.

If it were not for the Program in AAAS, I would not have had this exposure to race-conscious community planning in my undergraduate learning. By putting his weight of support behind this several generations before I was born, I feel further empowered to use my graduate education in Urban Planning at MIT as a tool for improving the lives of disenfranchised, underrepresented, and marginalized people with urgency. And so I thank Drake for giving the gift of urgency to any within earshot for advancing our communities and the world.

By Matthew Miller
2011-12 Race Forward Theme:

Race & Education

AAAS extended the Race Forward Initiative to include the theme “Race & Education.” Given that education continues to be a space for upward mobility, it is important to understand how race continues to play an important role in our schools, classrooms, identities and interactions.

Autumn quarter we hosted a panel with three top education scholars, Tyrone Howard (UCLA), Christine Sleeter, CSU Monterey, and Jeff Duncan Andrade (SFSU) to kick off the theme. AAAS Director and prominent education scholar, Dr. Ametha F. Ball led the panel in a discussion about the ways in which race continues to be significant in our education system. The panel explained the need to consciously examine the role of race in schools and classrooms in order to truly address the educational inequalities that persist today.

Winter quarter AAAS director, Education Professor Ametha Ball and AAAS associate director, Dr. Cheryl Brown co-taught a lecture series on “Race and Education” in which a number of prominent scholars gave lectures covering a variety of important topics in education.

“One of the most fulfilling classes I’ve ever taken in my life.”

-Kareem Alston ’14. AAAS-IDA Major
Kareem Alston ’14 reflects on the Race & Education lecture series

One of the most fulfilling classes I’ve ever taken in my life was a class put together by the African & African American Studies department called ‘Race & Education.’ The class featured a different subject as well as guest lecturers every week to engage different issues and phenomena that exist within modern day education. We learned about everything from Mundane Extreme Environmental Stress (M.E.E.S) in education to Hip Hop pedagogies that are proving to narrow the gap between underrepresented minorities and educational success. I was greatly impacted by the devastating affects of the ‘School to Prison Pipeline’ but related most with Professor MK Asante who started his career in the arts and is now a 30 year-old tenured Professor at Morgan State University. This class has inspired me to invest more time and energy in figuring out what my place is in regards to making education more equitable for all races and creeds that exist in this country. The fact that the course had such variety and breadth in regards to not only what issues exist in education but also what people are doing to solve them, it really gave me a scope of what I could possibly pursue in the future.
2012 St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture

Delivered by Angela Davis

AAAS ended our yearlong celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of Dr. Drake’s birth with our 2012 St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by living legend Professor Angela Davis. Like Drake, Davis is a scholar activist. She expressed her gratitude for the relationship she had with Drake and shared fond memories of conversations she had with him about the epistemological function of praxis. After acknowledging the significance of Drake’s work she gave a powerful lecture on the school to prison pipeline. Her lecture closed out the year’s Race Forward theme “Race & Education”. In addition to her critique of our education system, Davis discussed the Trayvon Martin case and the significance of the occupy movement. Davis was well received by an audience of over 700 people, which included students enrolled in the Center for Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity’s (CCSRE) “Occupy Art” course.

On the following page AAAS major Milton Achelpohl reflects on the significance of his opportunity to have dinner with Professor Davis and attend the lecture.
Much of my Stanford journey has been marked by a fear and insecurity that perhaps the path I have pointed myself down, the trajectory I have chosen, is in fact too far from the norm. Many of the places I go and spaces I frequent are not meant for me, I’m told by most of the world that I don’t belong.

These little revolutions are what I live for, and the daily rebellions as a scholar-activist, as Angela Davis reminded our small dinner gathering, were what shaped and changed the course of history. Davis reminded my fellow African and African American Studies students and me that we can never stop pushing, or cease the questioning of why our world is the way it is; why some have much while others have little, and why justice sometimes seems like a distant academic conjecture.

I left the auditorium following Davis’ keynote later in the evening with one simple mantra engrained upon my memory: We are never too radical. This came in response to a fear expressed by a peer that I have often shared: that I might alienate myself or others by continuing to push, to disrupt, or to act.

This call to never conform, to never stop questioning and to never be afraid to be different, to indeed be radical, moved me to design a Student Initiated Course on just that: Radical thought. So this fall, with those words from Angela Davis framing the agenda, I will explore with a dozen of my peers what the personal political philosophy of radicalism means and the possibilities of refusing not to be different.

By Milton Achelpohl
Why you should take introduction to AAAS

By Jessica Reed ’15

Embodying the symbol, Sankofa, Stanford’s Program in African and African American Studies (AAAS) provides an intellectual space for learning about the past in order to bring about uplifting change in the present. While students may or may not decide to pursue a major or a minor in AAAS, and write an honors thesis or senior paper, many may find that their interests are sparked after taking the course, “introduction to African and African American Studies,” offered during the winter quarter.

Led by ASSU “Teacher of the year” Dr. Cheryl Brown, students of all backgrounds are able to read and discuss texts, including Nell Painter’s Creating Black Americans, Paula Giddings’s When and Where I Enter, and W.E.B DuBois’ The Souls of Black Folk. One of the most beneficial opportunities offered by the course, however, is learning from Stanford core faculty who act as guest lecturers, presenting students with their knowledge about issues that may have been introduced in the texts. This past year, guest lecturers have included Professor James T. Campbell who spoke on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its global impact, Professor Jennifer Brody who has closely studied the Harlem Renaissance, Professor Bryan Brown who made present connections between race and opportunities in education, among more.

Guest lecturers were essential in not only helping students understand that the Black Experience is one of both trials and triumphs, but also conveying that learning about it is necessary for any awareness and progress to take place.

Why I majored in AAAS

By William Wagstaff ’12

As a premed student, I was a bit hesitant to major in African and African American Studies (AAAS). I did not think that there was any way that my interests in being a physician-scientist could intersect with my interest in African and African American history. I could not have been more wrong. After changing my major to AAAS, I took great core courses like Intro to African American Literature and a class on W.E.B. Du Bois. I was also able to take classes about urban science education and wrote my honors thesis on the rates of African American students from Stanford matriculating into medical school. The major’s flexibility and supportive faculty and staff are elements that set it above all others. Faculty and staff in the major reach out to really get to know students outside of the academic context. For me, this resulted in getting funny emails to make me laugh, emails to check in on my thesis, and chances to meet Dr. Christopher Emdin, a science education professor visiting from Columbia. If AAAS is a great choice for someone interested in earning an MD/PhD then it’s also a great choice for you.

William Dion Wagstaff Jr., Frank Lloyd Wright, and Rick James are all proud current/former residents of Buffalo, New York. As a premed African and African American Studies major, William had the opportunity to write a thesis about the pipeline from Stanford to medical school for African American students. After completing his masters in Curriculum Studies and Teacher Education with a focus on Undergraduate Science Education, William plans on attending medical school to pursue an MD/PhD to become a professor. His hopes are to integrate his passion for education and affinity for science to encourage more African Americans to enter STEM fields. William would not have made it to graduation without the love and support of his family and community.
Celebrating AAAS Class of 2012

AAAS Bachelors of Arts
Victoria Araromi, with Honors, B.A. International Relations, minor in Chinese
Samantha Nicole Johnson
Katie Rosman, with Honors, B.A. in Public Policy
William Dion Wagstaff Jr., with Honors

AAAS Minors
Steven Lewis Morris Jr., B.A. in Political Science
Matthew Miller, B.A. in Urban Studies with Honors
Kelsei Wharton, B.A. in International Relations

Honors & Senior Theses
Victoria Araromi, "How did you get here?: An Exploration of First and Second Generation Chinese, Mexican and Nigerian Americans in Higher Education"

Samantha Nicole Johnson, “School Choice: The Role of Charter Schools in a Segregated Society”
Matthew Miller, (Thesis for Urban Studies) "From Dust to Dust: Mapping Race & Risk to PCB Exposure in West Oakland’s Soil, Water, and Food from 1940-2000"

Katie Rosman, “Want a Job? Not so Fast: Examining the Effectiveness of Employment Services for Homeless Residents of Chicago”

William Dion Wagstaff Jr., “Why Are All the Black Kids Missing in Chemistry?: An Analysis of Stanford’s Success or Lack Thereof with Improving the Pipeline to Medical and Graduate School for African American Students"
AAAS Director, Professor Arnetha F. Ball served as the President of American Education Research Association (AERA) for 2011-12. She hosted the annual conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The conference theme was “Non Satis Scire: To Know Is Not Enough.” It was well attended by members and guests from around the world and was a great success. Dr. Ball gave an outstanding presidential lecture encouraging her colleagues to move beyond theory to practice. As her presidency came to an end she began her duties as the US representative for the World Educational Research Association, and will be traveling to India and Australia this coming year to speak on their behalf.

AAAS Associate Director, Dr. Cheryl A. Brown was awarded “Teacher of the year” by the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU).

AAAS major Jessica Anderson ’14 received the “Black Arts” award at the Black Community Services Center’s (BCSC) award ceremony. This year Jessica sang in two groups and starred in the Stanford’s production of “The Color Purple.”

AAAS Awards

Academic Achievement and Service Award
KATIE ROSMAN ’12

Kennel Jackson Research Award
MATTHEW MILLER ’12

Shanta Annan Memorial Award
NATASHA KEIKANTSE MMONATAU ’15 & JESSICA REED ’15

Trustee Leadership Award
WILLIAM DION WAGSTAFF JR. ’12
2011-2012 AAAS Events

AAAS 2012 newsletter highlights a few of our programs from the 2011-12 year. Unfortunately this Newsletter does not contain the space to give appropriate attention to all the sponsored and co-sponsored events this year. However, the following section can at least list the names of several (although not all) events that were not highlighted in our Newsletter.

**Diaspora Table Discussions** offer an opportunity for critical discussion of various topics relevant to the African Diaspora, which are presented in dialectic forums with faculty, graduate student, and undergraduates. This year’s Diaspora Table included the following:

10/4/11: **Examining the role of race in the summer’s blockbusters**

10/18/11: **Standards of Beauty: Has Anything Changed since your Grandparents were dating?**

11/1/11: **The Dutch Atlantic: Slavery, Abolition & Emancipation**
Dr. Kwame Nimako

11/15/11: **The Occupy Movement: What role are people of color playing?** - Mark Gonzales
Co-Sponsor: Institute for Diversity in the Arts (IDA)

4/10/12: **Life as a Black Ukrainian: How some Natives are treated like foreigners**, Terrell Starr
Co-Sponsor: the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREEES)

5/22/12: **Copyright Law & the Politics of African American Literary History**, Dr. Gene Andrew Jarrett
Co-Sponsors: English Department and American Studies

**Other Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Events**

10/21/11: 2011 Homecoming Weekend: **Afternoon with Corey Booker ’91, ’92** Co-Sponsor: Black Community Services Center

2/8/12: **The Politics of Reconciliation: 13 years after the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**, Dr. Jonathan Jansen ’91
Co-Sponsors: the Center for African Studies, SU School of Education, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

4/20/12: **Film Screening: “Black Power Mixtape,”** Co-Sponsors: Freshmen Sophomore College (FroSoCo) and Institute for Diversity in the Arts (IDA)
THE PROGRAM IN AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Arnetha F. Ball, Ph.D.
AAAS Director
Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Education
Past-President, American Educational Research Association
Co-Director, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language (CREAL)
World Educational Research Association, US Representative

Cheryl A. Brown, Ph.D.
AAAS Associate Director

Massa Wells
AAAS Student Services Coordinator

For More Information Visit:

AAAS Website
http://www.stanford.edu/dept/AAAS/

AAAS Office
650-723-3782
450 Serra Mall
BLDG 360-362B
Stanford, CA 94305