

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

APPROVED

FEBRUARY 15, 2019

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

February 15, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Affairs Committee

From: June Pierce Youatt
Executive Vice President and Provost

Subject: Establishment of Department of African American and African Studies in the College of Arts & Letters

RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees establish a new Department of African American and African Studies in the College of Arts & Letters.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University hereby establishes the Department of African American and African Studies in the College of Arts & Letters.

BACKGROUND

The doctoral Program in African American and African Studies (AAAS) was established almost two decades ago. Faculty from a variety of disciplines were hired (or selected to contribute) and resided in a number of academic departments, including History and English. Over the years, the stature of the program has grown as both scholarship and student interest has expanded. To strengthen AAAS as a Black/Africana Studies unit within a world-class institution like MSU, the progression to department status is essential to create the necessary structural anchor. The new Department of African American and African Studies will support the work of students, faculty, and staff associated with the existing Program in African American and African Studies and provide a sustainable structure to further advance the success of the longstanding program. It will allow both faculty and students to clearly identify with a department that specifically represents their area of study.

MSU's AAAS department will function as an interdisciplinary intellectual collective, centered on the study and production of knowledge of Africa and the



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African Diaspora, especially in the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The new department will provide an integrative education aimed at illuminating the experiences, lives, and circumstances of peoples in Africa and its diasporas, along with the many diasporas of Black peoples globally and transnationally. Today more than ever, these challenges require us to understand the complex interconnection between race, gender, and cultural differences that the Department of African American and African Studies will provide.

Consultation about the creation of the new department has included faculty and students through standing committees of Academic Governance. It has received endorsement from the Steering Committee and all relevant standing committees and is endorsed by the Faculty Senate.

Acting President Udpa has endorsed my recommendation that the new Department of African American and African Studies be formed. The effective date for the new department would be July 1, 2019.

c: Board of Trustees, S. Udpa, B. Quinn, N. Barr, C. Long