

# **Pan African Studies: Who's Who in Academe in the U.S. Today**

*Considering that Pan African Studies is an adjunct of the Black Studies Movement in the U.S., and within the title of this journal, we decided to visit the web-sites of four degree-granting four-year academic units (listed in alpha order by university name) that hold the rubric 'Pan African Studies' within their respective institutions. Thus, we have organized a non-evaluated introductory profile of their mission and status in academe to assist protracted critical discourse in the discipline (compiled by Itibari M. Zulu).*

## **Department of Pan-African Studies: California State University, Los Angeles**

The Department of Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles (<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/pas/>) was established as a program in 1967 (one of oldest in the California State University system), devoted to research, teaching, and programs relevant to understanding people of African descent in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora based on a curriculum that seeks to combine in-depth and transnational approaches to the study of the Black experience to provide a unique foundation for critical thinking and social analysis. The offers an undergraduate program of study (major and minor) leading to a B.A. in African American Studies prepare students for careers in teaching, community development and leadership, international affairs, non-governmental organizations, public relations, social work, urban research, law, civil service, industrial relations and comparable professions. The Department has four faculty members with specializations in: African/African American political thought, comparative race relations, African politics (South Africa), African history and government, Third World development, Pan African literatures, women in politics, gender and theory, and the political sociology of Black communities.

## **Pan-African Studies Department: California State University, Northridge**

The Pan-African Studies Department at California State University, Northridge (<http://www.csun.edu/~pasafdep/>) was founded in 1969 and is currently engaged in: teaching students about the African world experience; organizing programs that demonstrate to the campus and the community the richness, vibrancy, diversity, and vitality of African, African American, and Caribbean cultures, presenting students and the community with an Afro-centric analysis of the economic, political, social, and cultural oppression of people of African descent and making efforts to transform society by applying analytical skills and knowledge of some of the most critical social problems that exist.

Thus, the Department is committed to a Pan-Africanist philosophy based on the realization that all African peoples are linked by a cultural and spiritual unity and that the liberation of African people is dependent on the political and economic unification of the African world community. The Department has a faculty of twenty-eight (11 full time, 17 part time), a major and minor in African-American Studies, over seventy course offerings, and in conjunction with several other disciplines and departments, students can earn an Interdisciplinary Master's degree.

### **Department of Pan-African Studies: Kent State University**

The Department of Pan-African Studies (<http://dept.kent.edu/pas/default.html>) has a twelve member faculty at Kent State University that offers a comprehensive, holistic, Afro-centric academic multi-disciplined and interdisciplinary undergraduate major and minor grounded in the knowledge base, cultural norms, traditions, and general experiences of the diverse groups of people of African descent in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora with courses structured to provide an in-depth study of history, language, philosophy, education, literature, art, music, science, sociology, and other subjects. Hence students are encouraged to use their intellectual skills to bring about better organization and development within the African-American community.

In the arena of outreach and cultural affairs, the Department operates the Center of Pan-African Culture (founded in 1970 by the Black United Students) which provides student cultural and social activities for the purpose of promoting the cultural traditions of African people; house the Institute for African American Affairs that complements the Department's academic activities by providing practical support for the development of research/scholarship opportunities, innovative teaching methods, and facilitates interactions between the Department and the northeastern Ohio community, as well as encourages links between the department and other units at the university; links with the Mbari Mbayo Players Repertory Company of the African Community Theatre established in 1980 to help further the cultural development of students, staff, and faculty; Uumbaji Gallery which features exhibits of professional and student artwork, and notwithstanding the Department sponsors academic and social missions special projects with which students can become involved either for credit or as a co-curricular activity

**Department of Pan-African Studies: University of Louisville, Kentucky**

The Department of Pan-African Studies at the University of Louisville, KY (<http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/pas/index.html>) traces its origins to the campus unrest of the late 1960s when the first "Black Studies" courses was offered in the Summer of 1969 in response to the "demands" of African American students and their community allies. After hiring a small complement of faculty, the Department was established formally in 1973 and survived as a small Department through the 1970s and 1980s due to the dedication of its faculty, students, and community supporters.

In 1990-1991, then President Donald C. Swain approved a "Plan to Enhance the Department of Pan-African Studies" which enabled the Department to expand its faculty and strengthen its programs. Today, the Department is the only Black Studies Department in Kentucky with a comprehensive undergraduate curriculum, evolving graduate programs, and a strong commitment to research and service. As a result, an April 1997 external evaluation concluded that the Department ranked in the top 10 percent of "Black Studies" programs in the U.S. Today, the Department offers a graduate and undergraduate degrees and a graduate certificate; operates a Teacher Institute, the Center for Educational & Social Policy Research, a future scholars program, an international program (South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago...), and has ten full or joint appointments faculty members with specialization in eleven areas that fosters a multidisciplinary study of the societies and cultures of Africa and persons of African ancestry past and present, throughout the world.

