



2020-2021 BEGINNING OF YEAR NEWSLETTER

Dear AAAD family,

Welcome back although with all the work we have been involved in over the summer it feels like most of you never left. *There's a lot to report. Please read it all because there may be sections related directly to you.* We want to first recognize the commitment of so many of you who gave up chunks of your summer to support anti-racist work at JMU, serving on committees, task forces, and participating in townhalls and protests. Thank you to many who volunteered as part of a network that supported and counseled our students over the past four months through issues related to BLM and the pandemic. It was really gratifying to have so many of you call in constantly to “be assigned” new students to support and new responsibilities. We had to call on many of you to step in and serve on committees and represent AAAD at several meetings and we never once had anyone decline. Thank you so much.

We welcome our new colleagues (still updating the list) to this wonderful group of humans. We plan to have a meeting soon. Look out for the invitation so we can regroup and get on the same page and have everyone's input in decision making. Over the summer we had to call on groups of you to help so we weren't making plans alone, but now that semester has begun, we will reach out to everyone more.

We share just some active projects below for the fall semester. Please look at the “thank you” in this message. We've tried to highlight them in italics for easy spotting. It is important to recognize our colleagues for the amazing work they are doing and for the activism as well. As many of you are aware, we have many more projects happening. We cannot share all the information at once. We share, along with this newsletter, a list of other (not updated) AAAD happenings and those developing, many initiated by partners at JMU and outside (most of your departments and colleges are included).

Please note that our goal is to locate AAAD Center projects across campus so we are a center that is integrated into operations across JMU. For this reason and also so that we can have the logistics and labor support to incorporate many projects, we have negotiated that some of the projects we share are managed/homed within different units at JMU. This will also increase our visibility across campus and have your efforts to AAAD recognized as service within your departments.

We recognize the strong support, presence and involvement of our dean, Robert Aguirre throughout the spring and summer as most of these projects were developing.

Admin Support

Thanks to David Owusu-Ansah and Art Dean, we have the support of Access & Inclusion admin assistant, Kim Moubray. David OA is also graciously sharing the Graduate Assistant attached to his office with AAAD. We have assigned two AAAD undergraduate interns, Lily Craig & Lori Friend (supervised by Ms. Moubray and Case Watkins) to the A&I office to support Ms. Moubray and the graduate assistant, Savannah Brown, who is a AAAD alum we are all very proud of returning to JMU's SCOM graduate program. Ardyn Tennison, English graduate student will serve a second year as conference coordinator (supervised by David Babcock), and will also serve as coordinator of ASW (supervised by Lauren Alleyne). Our outgoing social media intern, Jenna Conrades, has done an amazing job, and our new social media intern (supervised by Case Watkins), Sophia Ferguson, is already doing fantastic work. Please help promote our social media spaces.

Facebook: @JMUAAD

Twitter: @aadstudies

Instagram: @aadstudiesjmu

AAAD Center Name

We are currently using the term CAAADS because it came up the most in the survey but will send out a vote to see whether there are other preferences. Center for AAAD Studies.

CAAADS Proposal

Many thanks to Sofia Samatar and Steve Reich who are working on the proposal for the Center. They will be supported in this by Office of VP research and Scholarship. Thank you all for completing the survey, which is informing their work. Many thanks to Bill Van Norman and Allison Fagan for also volunteering for this task should Sofia and Steve need extra support.

CAAADS UA Planning

Meetings involving the Office of the VP University Advancement, Dean Aguirre, Access and Inclusion have moved things forward quickly. The goal is to launch the center and fund at the same time in the Spring semester. We are handling this with support from a team from UA in creating a funding case and promotional material for AAAD. *Thanks to Joanne Gabbin, who is a mentor through this process and David Owusu-Ansah who is a core part of everything we are doing.* While we wait for the launch, we continue to advance the work of the center.

AAAD Internships

Many Thanks to Case Watkins who has stepped up as the new official AAAD Internships Director. Case has been the AAAD internship point person for the last two years and will now be registered with JMU CAP as the official director. Please direct any internship and research assistantship questions and requests to Case going forward. We have requests from various units and organizations for graduate and undergraduate students to intern at the AAAD Center once operational.

- SCOM service leadership will be working with AAAD on placement for some students. The task of focus this year for the AAAD part is: logo, advertising, brochure, social media templates for the Center (<http://www.jmu.edu/Commstudies/Community-engagement>). Thanks to our SCOM colleagues, *Jennifer PeekMease and Corey Hickerson*.
- Please reach out to Case Watkins with any internship or Research Assistantship requests.

AAAD-Smithsonian Partnership (with the support of the Honors College)

Many thanks to Fawn Amber-Montaya for championing this, and to Case Watkins, our internship coordinator who is currently working with Fawn on this. We had an amazing meeting with the team from The Smithsonian and we continue planning programming options and the discussion of MoUs.

AAAD Critical Perspectives and Pedagogies Institute (a partnership with CFI)

This annual Institute is championed and primarily designed by Dr. Mollie Godfrey, with the support of CFI, JMU Libraries, and JMU Center for Civic Engagement. This new 8-week institute will offer participants the chance to dive deeply into the histories, philosophies, methodologies, and pedagogies of African, African American and Diaspora Studies. Our goals are for participants to be able to use these knowledges to evaluate the places where implicit bias, colonial and/or racist thinking occur within their own fields; to discover AAAD scholarship and pedagogical resources in their discipline and determine its value for their own scholarly and pedagogical practice; and to develop a plan for structural and systemic change within their units. *Many thanks to Mollie, the chief facilitator, and our colleagues who will co-facilitate the inaugural institute: Taimi Castle (CAL), Bobby Smith (COB), Joshua Streeter (CVPA), Jennifer PeeksMease (CAL), and Kara Kavanagh (COE).* The Institute will also have a STEM facilitator.

ALCW changes name to Africana Studies Workshop (ASW)

- ALCW steering Committee voted to change the workshop name to "Africana Studies Workshop" to be inclusive of all fields of study.
- The new logo is attached (*We thank Sofia and her partner Keith for logo production*)
- Speakers Fall 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
Dr. George Paul Meiu, John and Ruth Hazel Associate Professor of the Social Sciences in the Department of Anthropology and the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University: <https://aaas.fas.harvard.edu/people/george-paul-meiu>

Dr. Delores Philips, Associate Professor of Postcolonial Literature and Theory, Old Dominion U: <https://www.odu.edu/directory/people/d/dbphilli> Thank you to the History Department for co-sponsoring this event.

Dr. McKinley Melton, professor of English and African American Studies, Gettysburg College: https://www.gettysburg.edu/academic-programs/english/faculty/employee_detail.dot?empId=07993391120013317&pageTitle=McKinley+E.+Melton

- **AAAD/ASW/CFI** – CFI has approached AAAD to run a workshop series “What Is Black Studies?” We are exploring ways to make this happen as part of the AAAD/ASW program as a test.

AAAD SCOM Accomplice Network

This partnership between AAAD and SCOM has been championed and designed by Jennifer PeeksMease and Kathryn Hobson. Thank you. This CAAADS project will be homed in SCOM. Please respond to communication sent earlier on this and promote the network.

Sisters in Session “Black Women in the Academy Research and Archive” (Name pending)

Thank you to BJ Bryson who has conceptualized and is championing the establishment of an archive of research on and by Black women in the academy. This project is supported by Sisters in Session and JMU Libraries. We are looking for student interns and researchers that can support this project for credit. Feel free to propose students to Case Watkins. These particular interns must care about the subject.

AAAD Conference

We’re going virtual! Please look out for the task sign-up sheet and also have a look at the CFP and propose a panel or two. Because we are going virtual, we hope many of you will be able to constitute panels with your colleagues from far and wide across the globe.

Many thanks to those already working on the conference:

1. *Conference convener: David Babcock*
2. *CFP: Sofia Samatar and Brooks Hefner*
3. *Keynote speaker management: Bill Van Norman*
4. *Keynote speaker invitations: Joanne Gabbin and Lauren Alleyne*
5. *CFP distribution and promotion: Daniel Beers*
6. *STEM featured speaker: Adebayo Ogundipe*

We are happy to report, *thanks to Joanne Gabbin*, that Claudia Rankine has been confirmed as one of our keynote speakers. We are waiting to hear back from Kimberlé Crenshaw’s people.

Sisters in Session-AAAD Conference Partnership

Thank you to BJ Bryson and SIS for conceiving of and championing this initiative. We plan to partner with Sisters in Session by dedicating a significant part of Day two of the conference to

presentations and workshops focused on Black Women in the Academy. *Many thanks to SIS* who will play a key role in producing this segment of the conference.

AAAD-JMU- 'Ole School Alumni Group Partnership

Championed by Jennifer PeeksMease and Art Dean

These are the 'Ole School Alumni Group: <http://www.oleschoolalumni.com/index.html>. The entire group consists of a network of about 120 alumni, mostly who graduated in the 80's.

Jennifer has met with their leadership and is championing this partnership, planned to expand in future. For the time being, the partnership will run as part of the AAAD Accomplice Network as the *Alumni Accomplice branch*. We have identified 3 areas to focus on:

1. Matching faculty with alumni who might guest speak in classes.
2. Matching students with alumni mentors who have experience in a potential professional field.
3. Communicating desired internship opportunities in specific professional or geographic areas.

Please reach out to Jennifer or Case (internships) if you have ideas, needs and requests, or to recommend students.

International Model African Union (IMAU)

Many thanks to Melinda Adams, who has taken over as coordinator for the JMU International Model Union and championed the AAAD-Political Science co-production of the project. IMAU is a CAAADS project managed by and homed in POSC-INTA. Melinda is supported by Biruk Haregu, JMU Alum and PhD student at George Mason.

May thanks to Chris Blake who has for four years managed our IMAU online presence and continues to. Check it out on the POSC-INTA website: <https://www.jmu.edu/polisci/model-au-2020.shtml>

Black Studies, Black Spaces exhibit, East Campus

A travelling version of *the Black Studies, Black Spaces* exhibit, designed by AAAD minor Spencer Law, was installed on East Campus last March. Spencer is currently working with Jeff Tang, Associate Dean of CISE, to arrange a virtual opening for the exhibit. *Many thanks to Spencer, Jeff, Daniel Robinson (ICI), Bob Kolvoord (Dean, CISE), and Cynthia Bauerle (Vice Provost for Faculty and Curriculum), for making it possible to bring this project to East Campus.*

Celebrating Simms

The ["Celebrating Simms: The Story of the Lucy F. Simms School"](#) project, which celebrates the history of education in the local Black community, received a \$10,000 grant from Virginia Humanities to undertake a number of exciting projects in the coming year. Project leaders Mollie Godfrey and Seán McCarthy are creating a mobile version of the original exhibit so that it can travel to schools and public buildings throughout the region. The mobile and [web-based versions](#) of the exhibit will also soon be accessible *en Español*. Look forward to seeing new panels added to the original exhibit at the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center and a

permanent version of the exhibit installed on the walls of Harrisonburg High School. Mollie and Seán continue to write about the project (an essay in *A/B Auto/Biography Studies* is on the way), and are planning to create an interactive map of digital archives similar to the “Celebrating Simms” project to strengthen the important work of local and community archives nationwide. *Many thanks to Virginia Humanities for their support, and to WRTC graduate student Ember Rensel, who will be working on the project for the year.*

#BLM

We recognize most of you who through the summer were part of various anti-racist movements and protests at JMU and beyond. We also recognize these AAAD students who birthed led different successful BLM interventions and protests:

Julian Denizard	Norman Jones III	Zenobia Lee
Christopher Jones	Spencer Law	Qyaira Colbert
Kory Schaeffer (AAAD Alum)		

Gratitude goes to many AAAD faculty here who supported many students at JMU through the summer, and mentored our students in activism and service, and fought for them when necessary. Each of these students and other students had one or more AAAD faculty member standing with them. There were many of you involved. But do allow us to recognize these tireless individuals: *Steve Reich, H. Gelfand, Jennifer PeeksMease, BJ Bryson, Taimi Castle, Matt Ezzell, Allison Fagan, Adebayo Ogundipe, Kathryn Hobson, David Owusu-Ansah and every member of the Sisters in Session on this faculty list.*

We are proud of our students now serving as student representatives on various committees at JMU.

CAAADS-JMU Libraries

JMU Libraries is working with AAAD towards achieving one of Libraries’ STAR goals: *“Better define Libraries’ support for JMU programs related to the Global South and to minoritized groups in the United States.”*

This summer, with the support of the *Office of the Provost, Office of the President and The Graduate School*, graduate student, Mathias Aboba, put together the attached list of resources from different disciplines, which JMU libraries can consider acquiring. Thank you to those of you who responded to Mathias’ emails. Please have a look at the document and email us any suggested additions or revisions (for your discipline) to the document. *Gratitude goes to the supporting offices, Mathias Aboba, Dean Bethany Nowviskie and Brian Flota.*

We look forward to another amazing year with you! Great things in store!

Happy Semester all,
Besi and Mollie