From the Chair

Several events have happened since the inaugural issue of “Black Studies News,” the mouthpiece of Black Studies in the Northwest. But events occurred so rapidly and intensely amidst hectic schedule that it was just impossible, with our limited resources to quickly bring out issue number two of the first volume. I am pleased that we are now able to release this issue to which I welcome you all on behalf of the Department. When I handed over the Department to Professor Dalton Miller-Jones five years ago, I least expected that I would be taking it back. But I am glad to take it back in a better shape than it was when I handed it over to him. For that I wish to personally express thanks to him for his hard work and to the Faculty for their patience and dedication. I wish to also thank the department for the opportunity to again lead the department as Chair. It is also a big challenge of which I am very well aware.

I have known Dr. Miller-Jones since he was first appointed Vice-Provost in Academic Affairs over a decade ago and have had the opportunity to interact with him at various levels and places, in and out of school, and in relation to activities with and in the community, and I continue to hold a sincere respect for his professional academic endeavors, university service, personal dedication to teaching and scholarship and civility. For us in Black Studies, like many other departments at PSU, he is a brother, a true colleague and a friend. He has powered the Department through many challenges, becoming a bridge between the department and the college and between the college and the community. Through Dalton’s usual infectious personality and vision, Senator Avel Gordly very gladly, quickly and happily decided to be affiliated with PSU to share her experiences with students and faculty. Dr. Miller-Jones has worked to promote campus climate that is inviting and supportive of international faculty, students and staff working successfully with almost every type of cultural group at PSU and the Portland community. Dr. Miller-Jones’s reputation among African-American scholars and the community, in particular, stands high always retaining an approachable and outgoing personality. He is a positive change agent in and among all PSU constituents and particularly among the Portland community, linking people at the top with those at the bottom and in-between.

I wish acknowledge and congratulate Professor Darrell Miller (the Great-great grandfather of PSU Black Studies) and a leading authority on African American History of Oregon, for his thirty-five years of service to the department and being part of most of the forty years of the lifetime of the Department. I would like to make mention of Senator Avel Gordly for bringing her experience as a resource for our students in our courses on Leadership and Community service and development. Dr. Joseph Smith-Buani, brought the highest honor of recognition from this year’s African Films Festival recognition awards in his role as a founding member of the festival and his dedication to its development for the last twenty years. I recognize Walidah Imanisha and Turiya Autry for their spectacular community performances and school programs. Their recent community radio programs are taking some of their contributions even much farther. Dr. Ethan Johnson should be praised for making the Black Studies Black Bag series a regular and extended academic forum for dialogue on issues of relevance to the black experience. While we work to cater to the needs of the local communities we service the international community through our overseas programs through Dr. Pedro Ferbel-Azarate, Ethan Johnson, Clare Washington and myself, focused on both sides of the Atlantic in Ghana, Ecuador, Suriname and Mexico and Trinidad& Tobago. In the next issue, I plan to dedicate my remarks to our students and the community. We certainly recognize their roles and it is more appropriate to dedicate a whole issue to them for we are facing the new challenges together.

I plan to take the good works of the past forward in a manner that will place the Department at the forefront and in leadership role and with the hope that the department continues, in a small way, to serve as a model that would demonstrate how gender, racial, cultural and educational diversity can strengthen our college and university as it bonds up with the community. We should continue to create bridges through curriculum development, fundraising and maintenance of good campus climate, between the university,
Cont. From the Chair

the community and the outreach programs of the urban community with whom we share our knowledge. But we have to do it in one fearless voice. This newsletter will now, more often than before, become our mouthpiece and a channel of communication. I challenge all Faculty and staff of Black Studies and Friends of Black Studies, even as we maintain distinctiveness and as the only degree offering Black Studies among very few in the nation, to join me to strive to raise the department’s endeavors in sustainable ways to the highest levels, by using it to the full and to usher in refreshing transformations, to enhance the mission of the College and the University. I am pleased to lead you as we move forward. Good ideas, positive teamwork, persistent communication, dedication, a little toughness where necessary, and effective ventures of outreach to the key constituencies of our urban university and community, are all I ask of you all. We should always remind ourselves of these and to let them guide us in a united force to effectively and successfully face the challenges of the years ahead of us. Now is the time for us to look beyond FORTY YEARS and on behalf of the Department, I wish to sincerely thank all those who contributed in diverse ways to our successes of these forty years. Thank you.

2009 Ghana Overseas Capstone Experience

The 2009 Ghana Capstone provided PSU Students opportunities for first-hand interaction with traditional leaders, office bearers, chiefs, queens and queen mothers and also for exploring of a wide variety of traditional cultural events in Ghana. Students took part in such traditional activities as festivals and festivities, ritual, drumming music and dance, craft and other creative aspects of the local culture while participating on the archaeological field work. In addition to these, students participated in talks, seminars and demonstrations on traditional social, political and religious expressions, given by academic and traditional specialists of both rural and urban Ghana and also undertook individual field projects on approved topics or subjects based on direct interaction, interviews, archival, museum and/ or library research. These photos depict some of the activities and events of the Capstone.
The figure on the Ghana Overseas experience photos? They are numbered as follows:

1. Paramount Chief, Ogua Area lecturing PSU students, Cape Coast.

2. Archaeology field lab. Fort William, Anomabo

3. PSU-Capstone students at an orphanage, Accra

4. Archaeology Field crew Kormantse

5. Emeritus Prof. Posnansky with Kofi and Tom Butler at Kormantse Excav.

6. Ghana capstone students at Damongo orpanage, N.Ghana

7. Oral history interview, Kormantse

8. Ghana Capstone students at Orphanage project site
The 20th Cascade Festival of African Films (CFAF)

The 20th Cascade Festival of African Films (CFAF) took off on February 5, 2010 in grand style and ended on March 6, 2010 with an equally grand dinner. This 2010 festival hosted many film makers who visited directly from Africa. They include filmmaker and Howard University professor Haile Garima who presented his new film TEZA at the opening of the festival; the South African actor and now filmmaker, Professor Dr. John Kani, who presented his new film NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH in week two of the festival. Course participants have rated this year’s films and appearances of the film makers and the knowledge they facilitated as very high and positive. The Cameroonian actress and filmmaker Josephine Ndagnou ended the show with her new film PARIS OR NOTHING, which drew a very large audience.

The CFAF has become an important and familiar part of the celebrations of Black History and Women’s History months at the Cascade campus of Portland Community College, the chief sponsor and host of the five-week festival. Founded in 1991 with four films and an audience of 400, the festival has expanded to screening more than twenty films to an audience expected to exceed 5,500 people at the 20th festival this year. PSU and the BST and Middle East Studies departments are among the growing number of major sponsors of the festival which is free of admission cost and open to the public.

The festival has been an excellent resource for Portland State University (PSU)

The Black Studies Department offers a course “African culture in Films” that allows students to participate in the festival and to conduct projects on the films, examining and discussing their implication for our understanding of Africans and African culture now and in the past. They also examine the modes and techniques of presentations by the filmmakers. The course also explores the fundamental similarities and differences in themes, actors in the films, circumstances and the historical, political and social connections. The CFAF has helped developing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the richness, complexity, and diversity of African peoples and their cultures. ([http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/about/mission](http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/about/mission)).

-Joseph Smith-Buani, Instructor, Black Studies

Other Worlds are Possible

Walidah Imarisha, Adjunct Instructor, guest-edited a special section of the Jan./Feb. 2010 issue of Left Turn Magazine in a special feature “Other Worlds Are Possible: Visionary Fiction, Culture and Organizing”. Visionary fiction is defined as writing that speaks directly to those transformative qualities present in science fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, superheroes and comic books, alternate history and magical realism. The issue includes articles by award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, award-winning filmmaker Vagabond and nationally known artist Alexis Pauline Gumbs. Left Turn Magazine focuses on organizing and activist work happening nationally and internationally.
Max Rameau Stormed PSU

Black Studies sponsored a Northwest speaking tour Nov. 12-17, 2009 with Max Rameau, founder of the Miami-based organization “Take Back the Land”. The organization’s solution to the fact that Florida had the second highest foreclosure rate in the country is a controversial one: take over bank-owned foreclosed homes (without permission) and move homeless families into them. “Take Back the Land” has received a deluge of media coverage, including The New York Times, USA Today, Fox News, as well as a spot in Michael Moore’s newest documentary, Capitalism: A Love Story. Max’s events have always been very well-attended and well-received, but the biggest turn out by far was his Portland State University show. Over 150 packed and overflowed a Smith Memorial Union room to hear Max present and engage in a conversation around housing, homeless, race and direct action. The evening, facilitated by Black Studies Instructor Walidah Imarisha, opened with Black Studies Chair Kofi Agorsah’s opening remarks, which tied “Take Back the Land’s” endeavors historically to that of Maroon (runaway freedom fighters) communities in the Americas. Local hip hop artist Mic Crenshaw added his poetic voice to the mix. “These are real things people have to deal with everyday, and it is the same issues I address in my music as people struggling in the face of a system that focuses on money instead of humanity,” Crenshaw states. The event was co-sponsored by the Department Black Studies, PSU’s Students for Unity, the Sociology Department, KBOO Radio, and the Portland Housing Center.

- Walidah Imarisha, Instructor, Black Studies

Black Panther Black Bag Event

Over 80 attended the Black Bag event concerning the history of the Black Panther Party Dec. 2, 2009 in the Multicultural Center. The speakers included Dr. Leroy Haynes, former Texas Black Panther founder and current senior past at the CME Church, and Kent Ford, founder of the Portland Panther chapter. Their discussion looked at the history of the Black Panther Party nationwide and here in Portland, and looked at lessons and legacies to be taken away from the Party’s history. They focused also on debunked many of the myths about the Party - i.e., that the Party was violent; that they were anti-white; that they were ignorant by highlighting the free breakfast program that Party ran that fed 10,000 children nationwide every day for years, the political education and history classes (and eventually a school) the Party ran, and the fact that the Panthers operated under the letter of the law as an organization. The event was planned in conjunction with a new course taught by Walidah Imarisha BST 411 - History of the Black Panther Party. The class, which was full several weeks before classes began, showed there is an ongoing interest by students to learn about and learn from the Black Panther Party and the larger social change movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The Black Studies Department in conjunction with the Multicultural Center hosts the ongoing Black Bag series, designed to bring conversations and speakers relevant to the community onto campus so students can engage in dialogue around important issues.

- Walidah Imarisha
Instructor, Black Studies
**PSU BLACK STUDIES GOES TO UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE AMERICA IN MORELIA, MEXICO**

During the Winter of the last academic year, Prof. Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate taught for the Northwest Consortium for Study Abroad (NCSA) program at the Universidad Latina de America in Morelia, Michoacan. The objective of the program is to provide Spanish language and cultural immersion for students from universities of the Pacific Northwest, including PSU. Pedro taught a class called “Race, Class and Identity in Latin America” and provided opportunities for students to research this topic as it applies to Mexico.

Over the period of Spanish colonialism in the Americas, many enslaved and free African people came to Mexico and lived in cities including Vera Cruz and Oaxaca. Juan Cortez, an African enslaved by conquistador Hernan Cortez, was in Mexico as early as 1519. Like other regions of the Americas with slave populations, Mexico saw great resistance against slavery, including the establishment of palenques or Maroon communities, and warfare against colonial authorities. The community of San Lorenzo or Yanga is a well known historic Black community and still exists today outside the city of Vera Cruz. Contemporary populations of Afro-Mexicans also live in a region called Costa Chica, south of Acapulco. Over the years there have also been many migrations of people of African descent from the Caribbean and other parts of the Americas, contributing their culture and bloodlines to Mexico.

Even before the abolition of slavery in 1810, Mexico had seen mixing in populations of people of Indigenous, European and African descent, as part of the backdrop of Spain’s colonial endeavor. While the Black component of Mexico’s history was both downplayed and assimilated into Mexico’s national identity, racism and eurocentric classism persisted. Indeed, even today, Mexicans with more visible European ancestry have unearned social advantages. At the same time, Indigenous and Afro-Mexican people continue to be socially oppressed and economically depressed. From the perspective of Mexican national identity, the dozens of distinct Indigenous peoples and the few Afro-Mexican communities are seen as cultural groups, as opposed to racial groups, thus promoting the vague concept that everyone is racially "Mexican." This ideology takes the pressure off a need to explain the very persistent racial disparities in contemporary Mexican society.

Students benefit from the opportunities to study abroad and become engaged in the communities in which they are learning. The Black Studies department has supported international service learning programs for PSU students in Ghana, Surinam, and now in Mexico. Dr. Ferbel-Azcarate will return to Mexico to teach in the NCSA study abroad program in the Fall term of 2010. He also is investigating opportunities for service learning classes and Senior Capstones in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

-Pedro Ferbel –Azcarate

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**Conversation Project**

Walidah Imarisha was chosen to participate in the Oregon Humanities “Conversation Project: A New Chautauqua”, which offers Oregon nonprofits free programs that engage community members in thoughtful, challenging conversations about ideas critical to our daily lives and our state's future. Conversations are facilitated by some of Oregon's most respected humanities scholars. Walidah’s contribution focused on interrogating the current state of incarceration, nationally and here in Oregon, and explored the community-based alternatives to incarceration movement. Participants engage actively in figuring out the most important individual community needs. Walidah's previous contribution to Conversation Project was held at the Wilsonville Public Library and in attendance were Multnomah County Parole and Probation Department. Upcoming conversations are being scheduled throughout the state of Oregon through the year.

-Walidah Imarisha
Instructor, Black Studies
Black Studies collaboration with African American Alliance & North Star

The African American Alliance advances issues of concern to the African American and African community of Portland and Oregon. Meetings are held regularly on the third Thursday of each month at a morning “unity breakfast” held the Red Cross. Participants represent the leading civil rights, business, philanthropy, education, Health, Non-profit and social organizations that have a common interest in sharing information and problem-solving in a manner that builds community. Our Black Studies Department Faculty actively participate with the Alliance. Professor Avel Gordly’s students who take her “Black leadership and community development” seminar (Bst 407/507) are required to attend the Alliance meetings to witness leadership in action and to seek mentoring and internship opportunities.

Students in the Black Studies class on “Civil Rights” in the Winter 2010 included brilliant, thoughtful student leaders from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Black Cultural Affairs Board (BCAB) and Association of African Students (AAS) all actively engaged in critical discussion of today’s burning local, national and international issues. Recent conversation in this seminar has focused on the police killing of Aaron Campbell and student participation in community meetings and rallies protesting this tragic death. Students have studied the meaning of servant leadership, principles of leadership, leadership styles as well as the importance and significance of integrity and character as principles of leadership, given today’s local and national headlines. Student participants report that in this seminar they feel free to share their ideas and really feel heard, unlike some of their other campus classroom experiences and that this along with their other Black Studies Courses is the highlight of their educational experience at PSU. These student leaders took an active role in planning and coordinating the FRIENDS OF BLACK STUDIES founding event held at the historic African American institution, the Billy Webb Elks Lodge on February 26th. Community members heard a panel presentation from former student founders of the Black Studies Program: Dennis Payne, Cottrell White and O.B. Hill. In addition Dr. Millner provided a State of Black Studies at PSU. These are exciting times for our students in our 40th year of existence at Portland State University. The mentoring that we are providing with these students who carry leadership roles with PSU student organizations contributes greatly to their leadership development and is a significant step toward building a foundation for the North Star Leadership Institute.

-Avel Louise Gordly
Former Senator & Assoc. Prof

Clare Washington Honored

Portland State’s (four programs - Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, Student Support Services/ Educational Opportunity Program, and McNair Scholars) (TRIO) celebrated National TRIO Day with an awards ceremony on March 4th, 2010 honoring outstanding PSU students including Clare Washington, for their educational achievements. The Federal TRIO programs consist of nine federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services from individuals from disadvantage backgrounds. Clare Washington, a 2006 McNair Scholar and Fulbright, USA Fellow in Trinidad & Tobago who also received the John Elliott Allen Outstanding Teaching award for Black Studies Department in 2009 was the first to receive the TRIO award. Clare, who graduated with her Bachelors (B.S.) degree with honors and distinction in Black Studies and English/Professional Writing and receives M.S in Interdisciplinary Studies from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, PSU in June 2010, is an adjunct instructor in the Black Studies. Clare’s scholarly research and teaching interests focus on African American and African Women and Resistance in the African Diaspora in the Caribbean and the USA. See Clare’s three biographical entries in the African American National Biography (2008), edited by Professors Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Evelyn Higginbotham of Harvard University.

-Angela J. Canton
During the summer and Fall of 2009 Kofi Agorsah has continued an archaeological project in Ghana launched as part of his Fulbright Scholar program at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana in 2007. The project aimed at investigating the cultural formation and transformation of the historic Kormantse settlement on the Gold Coast, in response to changes occurring through colonial times. It sought to explain, by use of ethnographic and archaeological material, the processes and cultural manifestations by which the settlement’s population, including those who passed through Kormantse during the trans-Atlantic slave trade between the 16th and 20th centuries, negotiated their survival and identities. Preliminary studies in 1999 and 2007 indicate that Kormantse embraced the colonial slave trade and had access to abundant mass-produced local and foreign trade material and culture, while serving as a rallying point and an outlet for both the trans-Saharan and Atlantic trades. Bringing together archaeological assemblage, ethnographic and historical data to depict, explain and represent the numerous African populations identified under varying “Africa-named groups” in the colonial encounter in West Africa and their implications for the New World African cultures constituted major challenges of this project.

Specific issues addressed included identifying recognized material traces indicative of internal and external trade contacts and exchanges, migration routes and patterns of market traffic and, ultimately, the different groups represented in the colonial encounter with Kormantse and surrounding areas as the connecting links. It was expected that evidence of changing burial and other social practices as indices of the community’s shifting identity, would help determine how the communities in and around Kormantse adjusted to changing conditions of the colonial encounter. Artifact differentiation and sources of goods and “people,” travel routes, makers and makers’ marks on artifacts and scientific dates were main means of identifying and establishing how they related to emerging and continuing social distinctions within communities in and around Kormantse. The participation of students from the African Studies Department of the University of Cape Coast, Portland State University and University of Ghana, Legon is expected to contribute to international student collaborative capacity-building, exchange, training, experience and research opportunities and strengthen developing partnerships with local Museums and cultural institutions and solidify public outreach. It will also open up more tourist activities and opportunities and provide material for local efforts toward converting the site into a permanent field laboratory and site Museum for student capstone courses and exchanges for scientific, educational experience and research, while stimulating local and international interest, curiosity and support. Finds include local and foreign trade beads and ceramics, smoking pipes, lots of pieces of iron slags, cowries and other shell, fish bones, coin, and glass bottles.

The project is sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF), USA, Faculty Enhancement Committee of Portland State University, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Fulbright USA, Ghana Museums & Monuments Board, Chiefs & Elders of Kormantse.
Professor Rita Pemberton Joins Black Studies Faculty

Professor Rita Pemberton, professor and Chair in the History Department at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, will join the PSU Black Studies faculty this summer. She will teach two courses for the department during the first summer session: Caribbean Studies: Feminist Theory in Caribbean Studies and Health and Family challenges among Caribbean Women.


She is also preparing a manuscript for publication titled, Health and Living Conditions in Trinidad and Tobago, 1900-1938.

In addition to being a guest faculty member at PSU, Professor Pemberton is also a key member of Clare Washington’s MA thesis committee.

Please join me in welcoming Professor Rita Pemberton to the department when she arrives this summer

-by Clare J. Washington
REVISED REQUIREMENTS** FOR THE DEGREE IN BLACK STUDIES ARE:

BST 202  Introduction to Black Studies  4  
Lower Division Black Studies courses  12  
Upper Division electives in Black Studies
   Selected in consultation with major adviser  
   and spread over the geographic and thematic  
   specializations of Africa, African-American (USA),  
   Caribbean/Latin America  32  
Adviser approved non-Black Studies  
Upper Division electives  12  

Total………………..60

- A maximum of 16 lower division credits in Black Studies may be applied to the major
- Of the 32 upper division Black Studies electives a minimum of 4 credits must be taken from each of the three areas of specialization within the department: Africa, African-American (USA), Caribbean/Latin America
- Of the upper division Black Studies electives a minimum of 24 credits must be taken under the graded option
- Upper division Black Studies courses may be substituted for some or all of the non-black studies electives requirements with Adviser approval

** New Requirements are more compatible with many other departments. Be a double major

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**Black Studies Faculty - 2010**

E. Kofi Agorsah, Chair  Darrell Millner  Dalton Miller-Jones  Joseph Smith Buani  Walidah Imarisha  Avel Gordly  Clare J. Washington  Ethan Johnson  Pedro Ferbel-Azarate  Krys Ochia  Turiya Autry
Congratulations Class of 2008-2009

The Black Studies Department has embarked on its second quarter of a century of community and University service. An interdisciplinary academic unit within the Portland State University’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the department is devoted to research and teaching in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa. The department is the oldest Black Studies program in the Pacific Northwest and the only program in the State of Oregon that offers a degree in Black Studies. Departmental objectives are to provide comprehensive learning programs, community-based learning and service, and an overall heightened sense of awareness about general multicultural, diversity and gender issues covering the African, Caribbean and African-American experiences.

Students, together with faculty in the department’s programs, are involved in community-based learning and provide service to community groups and institutions in the Portland metro area and overseas. In conjunction with community partnerships, the department is also actively involved in the President’s Diversity initiative, which has helped to broaden the definition of scholarship at Portland State University for over a quarter of a century.

Black Studies Welcomes it’s Newest Addition

In November 2009, Angela Canton returned to work from maternity leave and graced us with the presence of a new member to the department—Alexander L. Robinson, Jr.

Alex was born on August 13, 2009, and is now eight months old. I surmise that we have a new Black Studies major on the horizon. Congratulations, Angela! And Welcome to the family, Alex.

-By Clare J. Washington
From the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of the Portland State University’s Black Studies Department newsletter. This newsletter will be published once a year at the beginning of each academic year. It will contain up-to-date information on the activities of the Department of Black Studies and the research, teaching, community outreach of its faculty, staff and students.

Angela J. Canton

BLACK STUDIES AT PSU

After the establishment of the Black Studies Program in 1970 as a result of student protests and activism in the late 1960s by individuals such as Cotrell White, Denis Payne, and O.B. Hill among others, the program faced a daunting task in its initial years at PSU. Universities prior to the 60s had not produced a large cadre of trained professionals in the disciplines of higher education that the new program could call upon for staffing. The nature of its introduction to the Portland State community, coming as it did as a result of forcible action by student activist, created in the minds of many at the universities questions about the legitimacy of its status as a new academic discipline. Others at the university opposed the new program for reasons tied to potential competition for resources or simple hostility to the notion that studying the Black Experience in higher Education was irrelevant. The establishment of a Black Studies program and subsequently Black Studies Department and a major and a Minor in Black Studies at PSU and its continued existence after forty years challenges those notions and proves them to be erroneous. This 1975 photo represents some of the early participants in the early development of Black Studies at PSU. The anniversary issue of the Black Studies Newsletter will carry some of their stories.

Left to right (Seated): McKinley Burt; (Standing): George Allen, student; Darrell Millner; (Seated): Charlotte Rutherford; (Standing): William Harris; (Seated): Primus St. John