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## Proceedings of the 2021 Global Voices Symposium: Critical Examination of Our Times — The State of Race on the University of Dayton Campus

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# **Critical Examination of Our Times: The State of Race on the University of Dayton Campus**

*Proceedings of  
the 2021 Global  
Voices Symposium*

**EDITED BY JULIUS A. AMIN**



# **Critical Examination of Our Times**

The State of Race on the  
University of Dayton Campus

March 1-4, 2021

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A summary of the 2021 Global Voices Symposium

Alumni Chair in Humanities

Julius A. Amin, Editor

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*Julius A. Amin, Alumni Chair in Humanities*

# Introduction

*Julius A. Amin, Alumni Chair in Humanities*

In 2016, the first Symposium on Race on the University of Dayton campus arose within a historical context of several events, including the nationwide racial crises beginning with Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, and the subsequent emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Amid these “headline” events was a lingering dissatisfaction of Black students on the University of Dayton campus; an incomplete understanding of America’s racial past; the experiences of Black and white participants in the University’s African immersion program; and my belief as a faculty member and then-coordinator of Africana Studies that we were not doing enough to address the problems of race and racism on campus. That seems to have been a very long time ago; since then, racial issues have surfaced in rapid succession.

Five years later, we are back in a similar situation. The 2021 symposium, like the first one, developed within a historical context of events that culminated in the protests of summer 2020. The headlines were many: Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Jacob Blake and many more. The nature and persistence of the protests confirmed that something had changed. Students from our campus participated. There was national and international outrage.

African Union spokesperson Ebba Kalondo issued a strong condemnation of what she described as “the continuing discriminatory practices against Black citizens of the United States of America.” Another of the organization was equally blunt, stating about the killing of George Floyd, “This is one too many. We may be Black, but we are

people too,” adding, “Africa demands a full investigation into this killing.”

On campus, students grew impatient with an academic curriculum that failed to address the sources and nature of anti-Black racism in the country. The protest of summer 2020 was indeed a reminder that anti-Black racism could no longer be shelved and forgotten until another crisis emerged. The time for change had come. Hence our symposium.

The goal of the 2021 Symposium on Race was to study the history of race relations at the University; to understand a sense of trends and attitudes; and to outline potential steps toward building a more inclusive and anti-racist university. The symposium challenged each of us to ask difficult questions about ourselves—what am I doing to end anti-Black racism? We have spent too much time on what others are doing and not doing; the symposium prompted a critical examination of self and called upon leadership to ask the same question of institutional structures. Speakers at the symposium included faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Attendees came from all over campus and the larger local community.

A project such as this entails the commitment and dedication of many people. I want to express my appreciation to a few of them. First, the planning committee—Merida Allen, Larry Burnley, Denise James, Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders, Tom Morgan, and Joel Pruce—did a superb job. I thank you for your dedication and patience. You made this worthwhile.

I extend my thanks to the president of the University, Eric Spina, whose vision of a university for the common good created a sociocultural context in which symposia such as these can and will flourish. I offer immense gratitude to Jason Pierce, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who immediately approved this project when I took it to him late in the summer. The provost, Paul Benson, has always been supportive of our programs, frequently asking if there are things he can do to assist. Thank you. Amy Anderson is always encouraging and promptly responded to my emails each time I requested something. Chris Agnew, chair of the history department, spared me from some of the department obligations because I was working on the symposium. Misty Thomas-Trout designed our flyers and never complained of the frequent revisions we made along the way; thanks for your patience. Our student workers Jalen Turner, Maleah Wells, Dezanee Bluthenthal, and Amira



Fitzpatrick did a superb job. Thank you. Heidi Haas, the office's administrative assistant, made sure that everything functioned properly. Thank you. I pay a special tribute to our presenters. I learned so much from you. Thank you for taking the time to do this.

To our audience, thank you for Zooming in.



# Welcome Address

*Paul Benson, Provost*

Good evening. I join Dr. Amin in welcoming you to this evening's keynote address for the Global Voices Symposium. I am very glad that



*Paul Benson*

you have joined this webinar and hope that you have been able to participate in other symposium sessions this week.

I want to thank the Alumni Chair in Humanities office and the outstanding campus planning team for their thoughtful work in developing this year's symposium, and I want to thank the cosponsors across campus for their support of these important conversations. Julius Amin deserves particular thanks for his leadership, vision, and relationship building as our Alumni Chair in Humanities.

For those who are new to this symposium, this year's theme returns directly to the theme of the 2016 symposium, which facilitated exploration of race on UD's campus as experienced by students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members and as informed by scholarship in the humanities and social sciences on the history of race in the United States and in this region of Ohio. The 2016 symposium convened on the doorstep of the beginning of Eric Spina's presidency at UD later that year, the appointment of our

inaugural vice president for diversity and inclusion and the resourcing of that office, and the design of an extended data gathering, listening, and strategic planning process that yielded last year our campus's strategic framework for work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The 2016 symposium was powerful and, from my perspective, profound in its impact; it was searching, painful at times, and inspiring at times.

We are on a journey as a university to make progress toward genuine inclusion, toward equity in the life of our campus, toward the building of a more welcoming and just educational, intellectual, and residential community that realizes more substantively the guiding values of the Society of Mary, which founded and sponsors the University. This journey is fraught with peril and risk. It is painful; it entails hurt; it will provoke misunderstanding; it will invite resistance; it supplies ample reason for skepticism and distrust. But this journey is what our mission as a university requires of us. The steps in this journey, as uncertain and sometimes misdirected as they may happen to be, can be occasions for renewed hope, for strengthened relationships and more resilient collaboration, for truth telling, for reconciliation, for restorative conversation and critically reflective imagination and agency.

By its very nature, this symposium points us in two directions at once. It asks that we look back—recovering, rethinking, reframing, and honoring histories, experiences, and voices that have been silenced or marginalized in our collective institutional consciousness. This evening's keynote promises to be a valuable part of this project of historical recovery and reenvisioning in the wider context of Catholicism in the United States.

But this is also a forward-facing, future-directed journey, as any journey must be. We are called to form intentions and plans, to make commitments and choices, to listen and consult, to act, and then reflectively assess those aims and actions. As difficult as these conversations and planning processes can be, they are an inherent part of our mission of learning and teaching, discovery and scholarship, community engagement and social transformation. I firmly believe that this is good and essential work to do, even when the stumbling blocks in the way appear to be insurmountable, and I firmly believe that this work will bear fruit, even when the timeline for that harvest proves to be much longer than any of us would want.

Thank you for being part of our journey back into our institutional history, our journey to hear the voices and learn from the experiences of our current students, staff, and faculty, and our searching, struggling journey into the future.



# Introduction of Keynote Speaker

*Amy Anderson, Associate Provost  
for Global and Intercultural Affairs*

Tonight's keynote address brings an important voice and perspective to a particularly relevant topic for our time and our institution. The



*Amy Anderson*

ability of faith and education to both suppress and free must be part of the critical evaluation of our times.

It is essential that we understand and learn about the diversity of experiences within the church and its educational institutions—experiences that are either marginalized or completely hidden. It can be difficult to face the full truth about the role of the church and our institutions, including UD, as both liberator and oppressor. We need to understand and embrace both the liberatory power of the faith and the Church's role in the histories of slavery, segregation, and white supremacy. Without this critical examination, we are not whole. Our speaker tonight will help us on our journey. She raises up the history and legacy of Black Catholics—lay and vowed, particularly women—for us to see the enduring innovation, courage, and resilience of these faithful. She helps us see that Black Faith Matters.

So without further delay, I'd like to introduce Dr. Shannen Dee Williams. Dr. Williams is the Albert Lepage Assistant Professor of History at Villanova University, a historian of the African American experience with research and teaching specializations in women's,

religious, and Black freedom movement history. Williams is completing her first book, *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle*, with Duke University Press.

Dr. Williams's research has been supported by a host of fellowships, grants, and awards, including:

- A Scholar-in-Residence Program Fellowship at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.
- A Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.
- An Albert J. Beveridge Grant from the American Historical Association.
- The Huggins-Quarles Award from the Organization of American Historians.
- The John Tracy Ellis Dissertation Award from the American Catholic Historical Association.

Her work has been published in the *Journal of African American History*, *American Catholic Studies*, *America* magazine, the *National Catholic Reporter*, Catholic News Service, *Religion Dispatches*, and *The Washington Post*.

A Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians and a regular columnist for the Catholic News Service, Dr. Williams received the Mary Magdalene Award from the Southeast Pennsylvania chapter of the Women's Ordination Conference in 2020 for amplifying the voices of Black Catholic women and girls in church history. In 2018, she received the FutureChurch organization's inaugural Sister Christine Schenk Award for Young Catholic Leadership for using history to foster racial justice and reconciliation.

Finally, her column in *The Washington Post*, "Black Catholic Women Like Amanda Gorman Are Forgotten Prophets of American Democracy,"<sup>1</sup> is something I would recommend to all of us. Welcome, Dr. Williams.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/02/10/black-catholic-women-are-forgotten-prophets-american-democracy/>



# Keynote Address:

## Why Black Catholic History Matters

*Shannen Dee Williams<sup>1</sup>*

Last summer's global protests against police violence and systemic anti-Black racism following the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd prompted numerous calls for the Catholic Church to acknowledge its long-standing complicity and agency in America's racial crisis. In addition to seeking formal apologies and atonement for the church's foundational and leading participation in the violent regimes of colonialism, slavery, and segregation, Black Catholic protesters drew specific attention to how the whitewashing of church history has aided in the erasure of those who suffered under these institutions and the dismissal of their and their descendants' demands for justice. As a result, the recent Black Catholic calls for racial



*Shannen Dee Williams*

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised version of the keynote address delivered by Shannen Dee Williams for the University of Dayton Global Voices Symposium held on March 3, 2021. In fall 2021, Williams joined the UD faculty as an associate professor of history. Her first book, *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle*, will be published by Duke University Press in April 2022. Williams is also the author of the award-winning column "The Griot's Cross" for the Catholic News Service.

reparation in the Church also included the mandatory teaching of Black and Brown Catholic history in Catholic schools as well as in the nation's seminaries and women's religious formation programs.

Black intellectuals have always understood that the most dangerous weapon of white supremacy has never been violence, but rather the ability to erase the history of white supremacist violence and the victims of said violence. Take me for example. Although I am a lifelong Catholic, I only began studying Black Catholic history by chance. While searching for a paper topic in graduate school, I came across a newspaper article and feature photograph announcing the 1968 formation of a Black power federation of Black Catholic nuns called the National Black Sisters' Conference. Until then, I had never seen a Black nun. In fact, I had never been taught that Black nuns existed in the Catholic Church. Neither had my mother, who was educated in Catholic schools for the entirety of her formal education and who in 1974 became one of the first three Black women to graduate from the University of Notre Dame. Determined to understand why Black sisters had been invisible in our lives, I set out learn as much as I could about the National Black Sisters' Conference and soon encountered an unfamiliar history of the U.S. Catholic Church. I also confronted a history of willful erasure about the Black Catholic experience that had to be directly addressed.

Specifically, to tell the stories of the nation's Black Catholic sisters—accurately and honestly—I had to tackle four core myths about the U.S. Catholic experience that have been popularized and wielded to obscure the leading roles that European and white American Catholics played in the social, political, and cultural propagation of white supremacy in the church and wider society. This keynote identifies these four myths and counters them with the facts of Black Catholic history. My address builds on the intellectual and educational traditions of the nation's Black Catholic sisterhoods, which were the first Catholic congregations to teach and institutionalize Black and Black Catholic history within church boundaries. Because many members of the Black sisterhoods during the Jim Crow era were the descendants of the free and enslaved Black people whose labor and faithfulness built the early American church, they recognized that teaching Black Catholic history was essential in the fight against racism in their church. Black sisters also

fundamentally understood that Black history is, and always has been, Catholic history.

A truthful accounting of the American Catholic past reveals that the Church was never an innocent bystander in the history of white supremacy and the brutal systems of colonialism, slavery, and segregation. Black Catholic history also teaches us that there have always been two transatlantic stories of American Catholicism—one that begins in Europe and another that begins with free and enslaved Africans living in Europe and Africa in the sixteenth century. For too long, most scholars of the U.S. Catholic past, by virtue of misrepresentation, marginalization, and outright erasure, have declared that the history of Black Catholics does not matter. Tonight's presentation demonstrates that Black Catholic history unequivocally matters—and has always mattered.

**Myth 1: The history of Black Catholics in the United States is inconsequential and primarily a 20th-century story of the conversion of African American Southern migrants in the urban North, Midwest, and West.**

Facts: The history of African and African-descended Catholics in what became the United States is as old as the history of European Catholics in the area. In fact, the roots of many Black Catholics predate those of most of their European counterparts by over three centuries.

Like in Latin America and the Caribbean, Catholicism was the first Black articulation of Christianity in the land area that became the United States. Despite popular contention, slavery did not begin in the future nation with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Virginia in 1619. Instead, Spanish Catholics inaugurated slavery nearly a century earlier, first in the Carolinas and later with the successful establishment of St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. That year, Luisa de Abrego, a free woman of African descent and domestic servant from Seville, Spain, and Miguel Rodriguez, a soldier and blacksmith from Spain, married in St. Augustine. Their interracial union inaugurated Christian marriage in the future United States. Their marriage record is preserved in the archives of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Although records indicate that Black Catholics make up only 5% of the U.S. Catholic Church today, Black Catholics have never been footnotes in church history. In fact, much of early American Catholic history is African American history and vice versa.

During the colonial and early national periods, free and enslaved Black Catholics constituted significant percentages of the church's membership in the cradles of U.S. Catholicism, especially Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. Baptismal, marriage, and confraternity records in those places and elsewhere are inundated with the names of free and enslaved Black Catholics whose labor and faithfulness not only fueled the early church's development, but also seeded antislavery and anti-racist sentiments in the faith. In many early American churches, which were often slave-built, the names of African-descended people are the first to appear on these records, underscoring the ways in which Black people embraced Catholicism and used it to carve out autonomy and mobility in their lives. Historians Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould have also documented that by the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in New Orleans, Louisiana was an Afro-female dominated institution with free and enslaved Black women and girls leading efforts regarding the spiritual welfare of the African American community.

Devout Black Catholic women and girls established some of the nation's earliest Catholic schools, orphanages, parishes, and nursing homes freely open to Black people. Several of these women and their descendants also became members of the modern world's first Roman Catholic sisterhoods freely open to African-descended people. These are the historically Black order Oblate Sisters of Providence, established in Baltimore in 1829, and the historically Afro-Creole and Black order Sisters of the Holy Family, established in New Orleans in 1842.

It must also be noted that many early Black Catholics, including several pioneering Black priests and sisters, had direct and even biological ties to the nation's earliest European Catholic families, including the Carrolls of Maryland, the Spaldings of Kentucky, and the Pintados of Spanish Florida and Louisiana. In the case of early Oblate Sister of Providence Mary Aloysius, born Anne Marie Becraft, surviving records document that her father, William Becraft, was "the natural son of Charles Carroll of Carrollton," the only Catholic signer of the

Declaration of Independence, and a free woman of color who worked in Carroll's household. One of the early nation's largest enslavers, Carroll was a descendant of one of the first European families to settle in Maryland and an early benefactor of the U.S. Church. He was also a cousin of the slaveholding Jesuit priest John Carroll, the nation's first Catholic bishop and Georgetown University's first president—a poignant reminder that White Catholics played leading roles in America's slave society during and even before the founding of the nation, despite the realities of anti-Catholicism.

Before entering the Oblate Sisters of Providence in 1831, Anne Marie Becraft established the nation's first Catholic school for Black girls in her hometown community of Georgetown in Washington, D.C. Described as “the most remarkable colored young woman of her time in the District, and perhaps of any time,” Becraft is the only known Catholic sister to possess a birthright to the early nation and church.

## **Myth 2: The Catholic Church was a reluctant and benevolent participant in chattel slavery in the modern era.**

Fact: The Catholic Church was the first and largest slaveholder in the Americas.

As a frequent lecturer on Black Catholic history, I never cease to be amazed by how often I encounter faithful religious and lay alike who sincerely have no knowledge of the church's expansive slaveholding past or the leading roles that Catholics played in the brutal history of the transatlantic slave trade.

From at least 1502 to 1888, European Christians, who were mostly Catholic, violently transported at least 12.5 million African women, men, and children from the African continent to the Americas, Europe, and other parts of Africa to fuel and sustain four centuries of Atlantic world slavery. This trade constituted the largest forced human migration in modern history and laid the social, political, and economic foundations for much of modern Europe and its “New World” colonies. It also resulted in the deaths of 10 million to 50 million African people, including babies.

Although the church's rampant participation in this barbaric trade is beyond dispute, it is rarely taught in Catholic schools and religious

formation programs. Indeed, many Catholics can point to Pope Gregory XVI's 1839 condemnation of the slave trade and slavery in the bull "In supremo apostolatus." However, few are aware of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century papal bulls, including Pope Nicholas V's 1452 "Dum diversas" and Pope Alexander VI's 1493 "Inter caetera," where the church first authorized the trade's development and morally sanctioned the perpetual enslavement of Africans and the seizure of "non-Christian" lands. Even fewer realize that Pope Gregory XVI's 1839 condemnation came some 337 years after the trade formally began and 35 years after the success of the Haitian Revolution. Indeed, it was not the papacy but the Haitian Revolution, led by baptized free and enslaved Black Catholics, that cemented the foundation of antislavery throughout Europe's slave societies in the Americas.

Perhaps most indicative of the silencing of the church's slaveholding past and culpability in modern racism, though, is how few Catholics know the story of São Jorge da Mina (St. George of the Mine) Castle in present-day Ghana. Established by the Portuguese in 1482, Elmina Castle, as it is commonly known, was the first of more than 60 permanent European-controlled trading posts and slave depots built in West and Central Africa to facilitate the transatlantic trade. It was also the site of the first Roman Catholic chapel in sub-Saharan Africa.

For more than 300 years, hundreds of thousands of kidnapped and enslaved Africans traveled through Elmina on their way to America's slave societies. At the height of the slave trade, approximately 30,000 enslaved Africans per year passed through Elmina, where they encountered a host of European traders, priests, soldiers, and families who denied their humanity and subjected them to unspeakable acts of trauma and violence.

Elmina stands as yet another powerful reminder that the Catholic Church was never an innocent bystander in the histories of colonialism, African enslavement, and white supremacy. In fact, I argue that the story of Elmina Castle—the many crimes against humanity committed there in the name of God—is as much of the story of the modern Roman Catholic Church as the Vatican is.

Slavery under Catholic auspices was no less brutal or savage than any other form of the institution practiced in Europe's "New World" colonies. Church and secular records document the brutality of Catholic

enslavers, religious and lay, male and female. Black Catholic historical truth telling also reminds us that the roots of the American Church's contemporary sexual abuse crisis began in colonialism and slavery. On August 9, 1659, an enslaved Black woman named Ana María de Velasco filed a complaint in the ecclesiastical court of Lima, Peru, against her priest and owner, Pedro de Velasco. Ana's complaint revealed that her owner had "stalked and beat her and forced her to live in isolation with their two young children to cover up their sinful cohabitation." The story of Ana María de Velasco, brought to light in Michelle A. McKinley's *Fractional Freedoms: Slavery, Intimacy, and Legal Mobilization in Colonial Peru* (2016), demonstrates that enslaved Black Catholic women were among the first to expose and use the law to protest this abuse in the American Church.

Religious orders of men and women were among the largest enslavers throughout the Americas. Most exploited and traded in human flesh without care or concern of the human beings that they "owned." Most European and white American Catholics also bitterly resisted emancipation and practiced slavery until it was abolished in every American colony, with Brazil—which received the largest number of enslaved Africans transported to the Americas—being the last to do so in 1888. In the United States, the church was the largest slaveholder in Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri at various moments in history from the colonial era to the Civil War. The vast majority of U.S. bishops, sisters, and white lay members also supported the Confederacy and upheld white supremacy and segregation in their institutions before and after the Civil War.

Catholics must also never forget that it was Roger B. Taney—the nation's first Catholic justice on the U.S. Supreme Court and a descendant of prominent Catholic slavers from Maryland—who infamously declared that Black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect" while denying the freedom petitions of Dred and Harriet Scott and their two daughters in 1857.

While such stories are sobering, it is important to remember that there were always Catholics fighting institutionalized white supremacy.

On the ground, free and enslaved Catholics revolted against slavery and plotted its demise at every turn. In fact, the first Underground Railroad led south to a runaway haven in Spanish Florida built by

formerly enslaved Black people who successfully fled from slavery in English-controlled territories. In exchange for converting to Catholicism and joining the Spanish military during the colonial era, these rebels secure their freedom. In a plethora of legal cases, enslaved Catholic women sought to escape their captivity, and free Black Catholic women like Lydia Hamilton Smith served as conductors on the Underground Railroad and fought for abolition and Black citizenship in the North.

When I teach the *Dred Scott* decision, I make a point to also teach the story of the Venerable Augustus Tolton, the nation's first self-identified Black priest and one of six African American Catholics under consideration for canonization in the church. Just a few years after Taney's decision in the *Scott v. Sandford*, Tolton's devout Catholic mother, Martha Jane Chisley Tolton, courageously fled slavery under Catholic auspices in Missouri with her three young children and settled in Illinois. In the Toltons' freedom march, they rejected not only the authority of a nation that could justify holding a people in slavery, but also the legitimacy of any articulation of Catholicism that denied Black humanity, promoted white supremacy, and upheld slavery.

Black Catholic stories of resistance and resilience serve as important counterpoints to the countless examples of white Catholic racism and violence during slavery. They also underscore the necessity of decentering whiteness in narrations of the U.S. and wider American Catholic experience. Indeed, a 2014 roundtable discussion on Black Catholicism published in the *Journal of Africana Religions* reminded scholars that "most of the people who have lived their lives under the sign of Catholicism [in the Americas including the Caribbean] have been Native American and African descended, not European."

### **Myth 3: The Catholic Church was in the forefront of desegregation in the United States.**

Facts: There are notable instances in which ecclesiastical leaders (e.g., in St. Louis and Washington, D.C.) in response to long-standing African American Catholic protests initiated desegregation in their



archdioceses before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954.<sup>2</sup> There are also instances when white Catholic leaders forcefully condemned racial segregation and exclusion in the nation and the church. However, these examples and individuals were always the exception and never the rule. Segregation was a Catholic tradition, and the Catholic Church was the largest Christian practitioner of segregation in the United States from the mid-nineteenth century through America's civil rights years. White Catholics—religious and lay, male and female—steadfastly opposed the admission of Black people into religious life through the twentieth century. U.S. Catholic bishops were also the last of the leaders of the nation's twenty-five major religious denominations to endorse the *Brown* decision. Even then, the bishops' embrace of desegregation was timid at best.

Members of the white laity were among the most violent foot soldiers and virulent leaders of the backlash to the desegregation campaigns of the post-World War II era. This was true across the country, but especially in the Midwest, Northeast, and Deep South. In New Orleans, white Catholic women led the movement to thwart the desegregation of the city's public schools in 1960 and the desegregation of the archdiocese's parochial school system two years later. Every day for over a year, the "cheerleaders," as these women were known, hurled grotesque and sexualized slurs, screams, and death threats at six-year-old Ruby Bridges and the four other Black girls tasked with upholding U.S. democracy. In 1965, these same women, only one of whom was excommunicated for her defiance, led the protests in New Orleans at the ordination of the Most. Rev. Harold Perry, S.V.D., the nation's first self-identified African American bishop. One sign read: "GOD DOES NOT RECOGNIZE NEGRO PRIEST, BISHOPS." Another sign read: "JESUS DID NOT CHOOSE NON WHITE APOSTLES." Such stories are rarely incorporated in surveys of the U.S. Catholic experience. Yet, these examples are vital to our understanding of what it has meant to be Catholic in America for a large segment of the church's membership.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Brown* decision overturned the legal foundation for racial segregation in public institutions, which was established in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896. The plaintiff in the *Plessy* case was an Afro-Creole Catholic from New Orleans.

#### **Myth 4: Catholic sisters have been the most progressive church representatives on matters of racial justice.**

*Editor's note: This reprint of Williams's address does not include her response to the fourth myth. This is the subject of her forthcoming book.*

#### **Conclusion**

Upending the myths crafted to conceal the church's racist past is essential to any Catholic program of racial reparation and reconciliation. Embracing historical truth telling, or the "true truth," as Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman called it, is the first step that we must all take in the quest for racial justice and peace in our church and society.

In narrating the stories of the Black Catholic past, I take my cue from the determination and courage of the nation's Black Catholic sisters—the first representatives of the African American Catholic community permitted to embrace the religious state in the Church. When asked in 2009 what she believed Black sisters' greatest legacy was, Sister Loretta Theresa Richards, the longtime leader of the Franciscan Handmaids of Mary, did not hesitate to respond: "The Catholic Church wouldn't be Catholic if it wasn't for us." For generations, African American Catholics fought to make their church truly catholic. In the face of the most egregious crimes against humanity and unyielding anti-Black discrimination, Black Catholics, especially women and girls, refused to surrender their church to those within it committed to racism, sexism, and exclusion. Their stories remind us that there has always been an articulation of U.S. Catholicism that understood that the lives and souls of Black people matter. Their journey is also indicative of just how far the church has come—and how far it still has to go.

## Setting the Context

*Merida Allen, Julius Amin (facilitator), Denise James, Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders, Tom Morgan, Joel Pruce*

### Julius Amin

My name is Julius Amin. I am a professor here in the history department, and I'm also the Alumni Chair in Humanities. I welcome all of you to this event. This symposium builds on the first one we had about five years ago. So again, I thank you very much for coming this afternoon. The goal of the symposium is to study the history of race relations at the University, to understand a sense of trends and attitudes, and to outline potential steps toward building a more inclusive campus. The symposium is designed to educate, inform, and bring to the forefront conversations of race on campus. Speakers of the symposium include faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Attendees come from all over campus and the larger local community and further. I have some friends in Ghana and Nigeria who told me that they're going to tune in. I want to introduce to you the speakers of today's session, the panelists. They are all members of the planning committee of this symposium. They have been working on this since September of last year; we met biweekly. And I want to just take a minute or so to extend to them my appreciation and my fandom for the dedication they have put on this important topic. I will introduce



*Julius Amin*

the speakers of these events based on the order in which they'll be speaking.

Dr. Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders, assistant professor in the history department, will go first. Ms. Merida Allen, associate dean of students and executive director for the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center, will go second. Dr. Lawrence Burnley, the vice president for diversity and inclusion, will go third. Dr. Tom Morgan, associate professor in the Department of English and the director of the ethnic studies program, will follow Dr. Burnley, and Dr. Denise James, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy and director of the women's studies program, will follow Dr. Morgan. Dr. Joel Pruce, associate professor in the Department of Political Science and the human rights studies program, will be the final speaker. Each speaker will have about 10 to 15 minutes to speak, and after all the presentations we'll open to questions, comments, and discussions.

### **Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders**

Thank you, Julius, for this excellent welcome and for really sort of shepherding this program again, five years later at another crucial time



*Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders*

for our nation, for our state, for our city, for our University. I'm happy to offer some remarks just briefly about my perspective, coming into this symposium planning committee; a bit of a disciplinary perspective as a historian and what I see as why this symposium is so important; and a bit about why I think the student session that I'm co-chairing with Merida is really essential for understanding race on this campus. Thank you all for being here and kicking this off. I'm sure it's going to be a provocative, thought-provoking, and

hopefully informative week of events ahead.

So first a little bit about why this symposium is so important to me, which I think really brings me full circle to some of the earliest conversations I had on this campus about race. The 2016 symposium was

mentioned to me before I even set foot on campus by Julius as one of the ways UD was sort of seeking to regularly discuss issues of race on campus. When I had specific questions about the University's history with Black students, with Black faculty and staff, Julius pointed me to the proceedings from the 2016 symposium and gave me physical copies as part of beginning to provide answers to those questions and providing some of the history that I was seeking as a new faculty member on campus that was really interested in these ideas.

As a historian, the archival work that's being performed by the student researchers really drew my attention to this project in the first place and made me very happy to be part of this planning committee. I thought it was the kind of work that seemed both overdue and necessary when considering the longer history of the University. I think it was also about the beginning of me considering my own space here and my work as a historian and as a Black historian and Black woman historian on this campus, finding my space within that history and that historical legacy and narrative as well. I'm very fascinated by the type of micro narratives that institutions create, and being a part of UD's community means I was very fascinated with the type of historical narrative that UD was creating. The work that Black students in particular have been doing on campus to really illuminate the past of Black folks on campus and the various different Black communities on campus as well as the activism ongoing are important efforts to both complicate and broaden the official historical narratives about University of Dayton just a little bit. Projects that do this work include the student researchers for five years ago, our very excellent student researchers this year, and the work of organizations like BATU to establish their timeline of Black history here at UD. All are ways that Black students are seeking to see themselves and write themselves as well into a historical tradition here on campus.

Changes on campus cannot happen unless we actually know the history and see the connections between the past and the present. This is what history can give us as a discipline—the knowledge and pathway to explore these connections. And this is why, in particular, I was very happy to serve on this committee and to serve again with student researchers who were really uncovering some really excellent connections that place what happens at the University of Dayton with much larger national conversations and histories that occurred within the

last 50, 60, 70-plus years. So even starting with the creation of BATU in the late 1960s and 1970s, seeing the connection of UD students to the greater Black studies movement and Black student movement that was happening nationally at the time is really important, because it situates UD as not in any way an outsider but actually part of a much longer and storied narrative of Black students' activism on campuses at large.

The symposium really matters, I think, because it once again asked us all to examine the state of things through the lens of past, present, and future. The extent to which we can examine new possibilities for what the future of students of color and Black students on this campus looks like really has to go through the extent of knowing, highlighting, and most importantly acknowledging the history behind it all. And I think this history continues to animate the current relations of students on campus as it is. Students' feelings of belonging and unbelonging are often related to a long historical trajectory of how Black students have experienced their time at University of Dayton.

For the student panel that I'm co-chairing, this is incredibly important. Black student activists have been at the forefront of change on this campus for many decades now, and Black students continue to lead on the ways of imagining what an actual inclusive and welcoming campus should look like. The historian in me was very interested in reading what students said five years ago, and now I'm interested in comparing what this new research and student comments have to add to the historical narratives about race on UD's campus. There may be, in fact, some interesting new information regarding what has or has not changed in the last five years. This should not be surprising to many of us. Some of you guys have been on the campus much longer than me; I'm probably the newest person on the planning committee. But what I do know, of course, is history, and I know that history is not always a neat narrative of progress; sometimes it stalls; sometimes it zigzags; sometimes it retreats. So what we may hear and see over the course of this next week may not present a very neat packaged narrative, but a complicated one—a nuanced one that actually will help propel us forward. The fact is that, historically, a lot has happened in the last five years, in our nation and on this campus. Our student researchers have been chronicling just that. What does race look like on university campuses and on this campus post-2015, post-2016, post-2020? So much

has gone on in the last five years. Students, faculty, and staff on campuses across the United States have dealt with several life-changing events that change people's perceptions and their understandings as citizens and residents of this nation, this state and, yes, part of the UD community. Yet, I would have to say as a historian, despite some assertions to the contrary about racial tensions being higher than ever, the historian me would say that this may not necessarily be the case. I would say that the knowledge and anger at the historical production and repetition of racism and white supremacy is higher. People are more frustrated now and less complacent. People are speaking more openly about race, racism, and white supremacy—more than ever before. There has been a backlash to this open discussion as well. So what remains to be seen is how we continue to learn from the lessons of the past—how we navigate the backlash to these open conversations that been happening over the past year. History can only light a path, but it does not have all the answers, after all. This symposium's keen focus on the historical as part of the beginning of the process gives me hope that we continue to ask and answer these questions going forward. So I'll just close here and say I really look forward to our student session in particular because it's highlighting the past, present, and possible future for students on UD's campus and Black students in particular. It's utilizing the rich history of those who came before them in the student panelists' own continued contributions to UD history. These students have not only witnessed history; they have been history makers themselves, and telling their stories is a crucial part of ensuring that the narrative going forward is one that accurately reflects the varied, complicated, and rich experiences of Black students on this campus. We are living in multiple historical moments—an ongoing vibrant Black Lives Matter movement; a global pandemic; a reinvigoration of racist political violence in our nation; and our own multiple moments here on UD's campus. As the historical research continues to prove, Black students have always had their voices. What always remains to be seen—five years ago and today—is how much everyone else listens. Thank you.

## Merida Allen

Thank you, Julius, and thank you, Ashleigh. It's been a pleasure to work with you during this experience. From my perspective, I just want to share how I came to be a part of this. I had the pleasure in my first full year of working at the University of Dayton to attend the 2016 symposium, and as Dr. Lawrence-Sanders mentioned, it very much shaped my understanding of the space that I was entering. It very much gave me a unique perspective of the student experience up until that point. It helped me as an administrator in the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center to be able to create relationships for students to continue to create their narratives. It also showed me that the students do look for those platforms and the opportunities to speak about their experiences. I've committed to creating those spaces where students are able to share—whether they had a positive, negative, or neutral experience—and know that they are supported. So that has been really a joy of mine to have the opportunity to work directly with students. A phrase that sticks with me here today and has stuck with me for a while, especially following the Maafa commemoration that we concluded last week: Lift every voice. That is part of my personal philosophy and the way in which I work to make sure that the voices of our students are heard, the voices of our alumni are remembered, and the work of our institution moves forward informed by them, inspired by them. So working with students—understanding that they are going through not only student development, but also identity development and transitions in their life and trying to maintain a status of being a student, a scholar, a success story as many are pouring their hopes into them during this journey—it's also important to me that those students have the space to be able to create their own sense of belonging, that students know that they matter on this campus.



*Merida Allen*

Spaces such as these provide those opportunities, and this student session is what excites me. It's an opportunity for peers to hear from



peers, to engage with peers. And although our center does quite a bit of work to create and build community among students, it's really a unique opportunity for us to have them participate in a symposium that is dedicated not only to integrating their academic journey; also, there are expectations for many students to participate in this from a class and the course identity that they have, so it's one thing for student to opt in, but for students to really commit to being a part of this space is inspiring for me because students are now able to maybe hear from someone that they hadn't crossed paths with any other space or any other time on this campus. And so the opportunity to strengthen that sense of belonging, that mattering, particularly for our Black students who are participating in the panel, is really a highlight for me. It will provide opportunities and will provide education for me and how I can better support those students. Again, we create spaces within our center and the work that I do, to be able to build those relationships. But it is also very valuable for me to know where students are and to position them in these very formal ways to be able to present their perspectives and to let us know of the experiences they feel. I will never forget from the 2016 symposium a student who now says, "I love UD with every fiber of my being; good, bad, and ugly, I still love my institution"—that student in their first year was on the panel and said, "I hate it here." We had a conversation after they spoke on that panel, and it really gave me some context around what they were talking about. As a first-year student, that participant wasn't having a great experience in their first six months. They didn't anticipate that they would be facing systemic racism within their residence hall and amongst their peers in classroom settings. They didn't feel they were prepared for that; they felt that they were sold "the Flyer dream." And so going through this transition of student and identity development—understanding who they were and the context of where they are—was really helpful for me to know who I'm working with. So it really helped to inform the way I worked with that class; that was a generation of students who were looking for a specific experience. So I look forward to 2021 to have that same opportunity to work with students. One of the highlights was not only working with my colleagues to help to develop and shape and coordinate this symposium, but working with our student research assistants. They have dedicated themselves in a pandemic, even working over the winter break. When the rest of the world was trying to

be quiet, they were digging deep into the archives of our institution. They were turning over stones and making connections with all of our colleagues and alumni to be able to unveil the good, the bad, and the ugly of our history from the last five years. So we did build upon where the symposium in 2016 left off. What we will be presenting of their findings will be of those past five years. So it's been quite a pleasure to be able to connect with them, many of them history students, so they worked with many of my colleagues here, and they have a genuine interest in the discipline. But it's also been a pleasure for them to be able to see that their probing questions are leading to more questions and to be able to see how they are looking at what happens next. We've been asked by many of the researchers, "What happens after tomorrow or after this session? Where will my history live?" And that's what I'm excited about—that we don't just look at this as, "What was in the past?" and, "Who were we at that time?" But my question—to all of us—is, "Who will we be, and how will we do that together?" So I just want to take a moment to shout out Maleah Wells. She's a junior and a phenomenal student leader on campus, and if you are able to attend the student session, she will be moderating that session with her peers. But she's done just phenomenal work, and we're looking forward to be able to present some of the research that she has done, to continue to live as a part of the fiber of our institution. So with that, I thank you all for attending and am looking forward to that student session.

## Lawrence Burnley

Thank you, Dr. Amin. This is an extraordinary opportunity, and thank you for your leadership, for the leadership work of our colleagues



*Lawrence Burnley*

on the planning committee. I'm just grateful for the opportunity to share and to learn in this experience. So I want to talk a bit about the state of race with regard to curriculum and raise a question for our consideration as we go on this journey together. I arrived at the University of Dayton in July of 2016, and I am happy to quote Dr. Martin Luther King when he was on our campus in 1964 when he was asked a question about the state of race relations in this nation and why he was on this campus. His response was, "Well, we have come a long, long way, but we have a

long, long way to go." And so, as we begin this conversation of the next several days, I think Dr. King's words are as true today as they were in November of 1964 when he said those prophetic words. Since I've arrived here at the University as the vice president for diversity and inclusion, we have made some strides. We've launched a comprehensive strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. We recently launched an 11-step action plan, which is an expression of UD's commitment to be an anti-racist institution.

But I have to raise the question: When we look at the curriculum five years ago, when this symposium last occurred, to this day, have our stories as African American people and other marginalized groups moved any closer to the center of intellectual discourse to a place where we can say without question that not only do our lives matter, but that our narratives matter, that our stories matter? I am a historian, and over the years, I've had the honor of engaging extraordinarily bright and intelligent students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. As a result of ubiquitous reach of core curricular content they were required to read in order to be deemed well-educated, I've had the opportunity to see how core curricula have impacted not only students, but many of their faculty—and how they have been stamped with the

seal of approval as being well-educated by educational institutions from kindergarten through terminal degrees. They were matriculating or had graduated, many with honors from institutions claiming an unwavering commitment to academic excellence. These students to a person were familiar with the philosophical and ideological perspectives of Plato and Aristotle. They were versed in the explorations of Christopher Columbus and Ponce de Leon and Sir Francis Drake. They were, and perhaps many of us are, thoroughly exposed to the literary contributions of Shakespeare and Twain and George Washington Brackenridge and many others.

They, and perhaps you on this conference today, are conversing on the thinking of Locke and Jefferson and Rush and Franklin. Many of us have great appreciation of European composers, reserving the term of “classical” to the music that comes from that part of the world. These students—bright and high-achieving students here at the University of Dayton—have been required to think deeply on the theological perspectives of Luther and Calvin and Wesley and Kirkegaard; they were required to engage the great thinkers of the Western rationalist tradition. Yes, these students were well-educated, and they had the grade-point averages and scholarships and degrees to prove it. Yet, when you think about the state of the curriculum and the state of race as it’s reflected in the curriculum, a large majority of the students knew nothing of the great precolonial kingdoms and cultures of Songhai and Ghana and Mali.

The well-educated students of then and maybe today, who represent the best and the brightest products of institutions committed to academic excellence, were not required to study the rich legacy of African resistance from enslavement and the inception of the transatlantic trade from the 15th century through the passing of the 13th Amendment. They were not required to examine and appreciate and critique the beauty of African history and culture or those of other marginalized groups. Martin Delany, Anna Cooper, Countee Cullen, Charles Drew, Ida B. Wells, Henry Highland Garnet, Robert Smalls, Frances Harper, Maggie Walker, Marcus Garvey, Carter G. Woodson, James Baldwin, Fannie Lou Hamer—giants of history in their respective fields. Has the state of race moved these narratives and these stories to the center of our curriculum at the University of Dayton? Has a student, by the time they have graduated, been exposed to these voices and these narratives that have shaped not only our past, but our current moment? These and other

untold stories were virtually unknown to many of our students and, I would say, many of our faculty. Now there are faculty, some of whom are at this symposium today, who have navigated the realities of systemic racism in institutions and have achieved more inclusive curriculum to expose students to truth from multiple perspectives—but some faculty have continued to have this marginalized kind of curriculum that marginalizes our voices and prevents us and many of our students to understand the concept of race, the construction of race, the conditions that created this construction and the policies and practices over time that have continued to inform the kinds of disparities and inequalities and inequities that still persist, not only on our campus but in the broader society. So I hope that as we go down this road today—while I celebrate the efforts of this university and others across our nation to achieve racial justice—to actually impact and achieve radical transformation of the state of race here at the University of Dayton and beyond—we do have a long, long way to go, and I do think the curriculum itself is probably the one barrier that I think, with all the work we’ve done around educational reform and race relations—the core, the canon—has largely been unchanged, and I think there’s an opportunity for us to continue the work to really understand this concept of race, to disrupt systemic forms of racial oppression, and to dismantle those policies and practices. That will allow us, five years from now, to look back and say that as a result of the efforts, the conversations, and the efforts that we’re making, there’s a substantive difference in landscape around race relations.

## Tom Morgan

Hello everyone. I'd like to start by thanking all of my fellow collaborators in planning this. I was involved in the 2016 Critical



*Tom Morgan*

Examination of our Times as one of the planners for that. And I think it's important to think about sort of where we've been and where we've come to. I'm currently director of race and ethnic studies. Then, I was in English; race and ethnic studies did not exist five years ago on this campus. There was plenty of curricular work that would contribute to these particular minors, and I think that's an important moment of growth for this university, although there's still, as Dr. Burnley said, a long, long ways to go. Also, the role that Dr. Burnley plays

at this institution did not exist five years ago. We are intentionally taking steps to move from the then to the now, to continue moving forward in important ways, and I'm happy to see where the University is moving. For me, the then versus now is particularly interesting. I would like to imagine, five years from now, if and when we have a similar sort of event, that the landscape is as different in a positive and progressive manner as, for me, the five-year shift from the 2016 scene. I think that if we're going to think about the particular panel that myself and Dr. James are hosting—and faculty perspectives—for me, it is particularly important in a couple of ways. We chose to focus on some of the faculty and staff members who have been at this university for a while. For me that's been particularly important because one of the people we talked to was Herbert Woodward Martin, who, for me, was particularly important in my own professional development as a Dunbar scholar. I knew Dr. Martin before I came to Dayton. I had conversed with him; he quickly became one of the few people who could actually answer questions for me about Paul Laurence Dunbar in my work. If we're thinking about my professional development here, some of the people on this call have been significant to my professional development here. I don't always think that the University has foregrounded those people, those voices, and that

history as much as it needs to do, and I think that part of the work that our particular panel is doing is trying to correct some of that. Our institutional memory is not as strong as it could be in terms of remembering this particular past and the contributions that have been made by faculty and staff over the last 50 years. And again just to point to Dr. Martin: In June 2022, we're going to have the 150th anniversary of Paul Laurence Dunbar's birth. In 1972, Herb Martin, in his second year at the University, hosted the 100th anniversary of Paul Laurence Dunbar's birth and brought together a fantastic group of authors and poets to speak about Dunbar's legacy. While 1972 is a very different time than today, a lot of the marking of that moment exists maybe in the academic sense, but not necessarily on campus, or there's not necessarily as visible of a mark of the legacy of that work on campus as much as I might like to see. If we're thinking about the types of movement that we as a university want to make, that's one of the types of places that we go. I guess before turning this over to Denise, the last thing I'd like to sort of offer specifically: As a white faculty member, I think it's important for me to highlight that we oftentimes imagine ourselves as allies and collaborators to faculty, staff, and students on campus, thinking that we're doing the good work of helping make their experience here better. But oftentimes it happens without sincere or heartfelt engagement with those non-white faculty and staff, and we end up doing more harm than good. We sadly don't have a very good record of retention with faculty and staff on campus. That's something that hasn't changed from then to now. I think that if we're going to do a better job, white faculty, staff, and students need to do a better job of getting to know personally, in depth and in detail, our colleagues so that we're giving them the type of support that they need. It's hard work, but I think it's one of the more difficult and important paths as we move forward.

## Denise James

Thank you so much, Julius and Tom, and I'll start by saying that this is a long road with this symposium from five years ago. I was a part of that first symposium. We were asked to talk about our perspective and how we came to do this, and perhaps how I've come to be a part of this symposium again and what might be different. I came to the University of Dayton in 2008. Sometimes when I say that these days—that it's been 12 years, going on 13—it boggles the mind. I feel like I blinked, and then I was here for over a decade. When I first came to Dayton, Ohio both to interview, but then also to live, I had only ever been in Ohio one time before, and that was



*Denise James*

about seven or so years earlier, to be a part of a group of activists who came to protest against police brutality in Cincinnati that had happened and stopped a conference we had planned on having in Cincinnati in 2001.<sup>1</sup> Some of you who have been in the region for a while may remember those things. So I knew very little about Dayton, Ohio before I got here but was pleasantly surprised. The way that my professional association does interviews, we used to do them at a hotel, and you would go to all of your interviews, and this University of Dayton interview was one of a few. I sat down with people who would later become my colleagues and was instantly interested. Philosophy is a very traditional discipline; it has all of that stereotypical ivory-tower intellectualism in its history. I got the sense from these four UD philosophers that maybe this place, which had as a part of its mission

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<sup>1</sup> Following the April 2001 fatal police shooting of Timothy Thomas, an unarmed 19-year-old Black man, in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood of Cincinnati, widespread protests and an economic boycott prompted years of difficult conversations about police violence and racial inequity. One result was the document known as the “Collaborative Agreement,” which contained reforms such as cameras in cars and naming of officers involved in shootings.



social justice, was a place for me to do the sorts of philosophy that I'm interested in. I'm a philosopher who is interested in centering Black thinking in the U.S. as a part of a philosophical approach to "What is the best sort of life?" I tell my students all the time we have, as Dr. Burnley referenced, a curriculum that normalizes certain perspectives, ideas, beliefs about what it means to be not just who we are, but who we are as a collectivity, as a part of a social world. Very soon after coming to the University of Dayton, two things manifested themselves to me that I was both happy about and then immediately saddened by. And that was: My philosophy colleagues were true to the picture they presented at that interview. They were welcoming, supportive, and inclusive for the most part. That entire faculty really supported me in thinking about how to establish myself as a faculty person who was interested in a subfield of philosophy that at the time had very few people—and still in relative numbers, has very few people. I was going to do Black women's thinking. That was important to me, and my colleagues said, "Yes, it's important to us," and I was very supported. I was supported by the dean's office. I got great colleagues and friends. And that year and then three years running there were all these *U.S. News and World Report* rankings and all these other reports that rank colleges, and they kept saying UD was in those top colleges of happiest students. But in those first three years here, I kept having students in my office, mostly students of color—not just Black students, who were saying they were having a hard time and that their experiences at the University were not jiving with this sort of brand of the University. And then I started to talk to my other colleagues, and I realized as people came and went and the faculty ranks that some of my peers were not in departments that were as supportive. That they were having very differently handled experiences with micro- and macroaggressions in their daily walk as faculty persons, and then increasingly, I became friends with and had relationships with staff who found themselves at a university where everyone was happy. But there were all of these cracks. And these cracks really did cut across our status as folks at the University and had a lot to do with race. So I had in those first few years here this odd experience of being, on the one hand, someone who, perhaps because of my personality, can weather some sorts of microaggressions really well and not having any sense that this was the type of deep issue that it was and, on the other hand,

someone who had become privy to and a part of a constant struggle for some folks. So very early on, I found an affinity with some folks who were interested in advocating for and advocacy about issues related to race on campus. So I started to give these talks about everybody being happy at UD—some of you were at some of those early talks when I was pre-tenure—and very soon, some of those same very supportive people started to send me emails and catch me in the hall and say, “But Denise, aren’t you happy here?” And then I realized that there was something that was happening, not just to me, but to lots of my colleagues, especially faculty and staff colleagues, where there was real attention paid to the personal effects of particular instances of what had been racism or sexism. But when it came to the structural fix that would make it so that someone wouldn’t have to say, “After the meeting,” or, “Come to see me in the hallway,” the University was lagging behind other universities about those things. Also, I had a sense that this was something I was called to be a part of. I could have kept having the same sort of experiences I was and not been a part of this type of community that I later became a part of and felt really attached to, but I didn’t do that. I did that pre-tenure, and as that time of my life was ending, Dr. Amin came down to my office and said, “I’m going to have a symposium.” And there was a sense that this was going to be a bit controversial. That something like this had not happened in the way it happened. And I think now that we remember it, we have a different administration; we are from we’re seeing this now from a different lens, but I do have a sense that there was some thought that this was something big and different and that we ought to be mindful that people would find this controversial. Fast forward these past five years, things have changed structurally and things have changed experientially. In that same time, we had students who were participating in Black Lives Matter, students who were really coming into their own as activists and advocates, and in the same time, I wondered, “Where was the activism and advocacy for my colleagues who are faculty and staff?” When I think about this current instance of this symposium and the work that we did in the group that Tom and I are co-chairing, I really started to think about how institutional memory around the contributions of faculty and staff is often lost. Especially when we think about issues of how the University has changed, how the University has lived through its history,

with people who work here. So our session that we are co-chairing on Wednesday has the fabulous support of Jalen Turner, who is a junior history major, who is going to give us some perspective from the archives. We're going to talk about some of our treasured colleagues—both faculty and staff—who have been at the University of Dayton for many years. We're going to hear from them in their own words—we asked them a series of questions—and mostly what I've gotten out of this experience, as opposed to the last time we did this, is that I'm not a hopeful person. I'm extremely pragmatic; in fact, it's one of my areas of expertise—the philosophy of pragmatism. For me, hope is the thing that you have because it helps you persist. The practical part of me is really interested in what can we do, what are the possibilities, and what can you envision for the future. At the last symposium we envisioned more structure around our diversity and inclusion efforts. Those things, I think, have come in some ways to transform the University, at least in its institutional leadership chart. Now I'm really interested in thinking about how we can integrate and keep in mind and transform the University to have a more diverse and inclusive faculty and staff, particularly around folks who are Black-identified. I look forward to seeing you all at the rest of these sessions, and I'm excited about what the week will hold.

### **Joel Pruce**

I come to this work, as someone situated in the field of human rights in particular with a curiosity about how stories and narratives promote or hinder the pursuit of human dignity—



*Joel Pruce*

whose stories, for what purposes, in the service of whose interests. Increasingly, both in my teaching and my research, these curiosities have led me to thinking more intentionally about notions of testimony as unique forms of first-person accounts of experience with abuse and marginalization. I also can find these issues in my work with the Human Rights Center through the Moral Courage Project, where we produce multimedia platforms that feature the experiences of individuals who witness and

shape human rights resistance in the United States. If you'll indulge me in a moment of self-promotion, the trailer for the new season of our podcast, which this round focuses on the fight for water in Flint, Detroit, and Appalachia, is now live on Soundcloud and elsewhere. The session I'm running on Wednesday is called "Testimonies," and it revolves around audio stories submitted by Black UD students, current and former, that will frame a critical discussion about how the Black experience is integrated into the stories we tell about life on our campus. In many ways, I see our work through this symposium and beyond connected to a field related to human rights known as transitional justice. Transitional justice is concerned with how societies deal with their own abusive past; as a set of practices designed to prevent democratic backsliding and the potential lurch toward future violence and instability. Transitional justice can take many forms from criminal trials to truth commissions. Well-known global cases include post-apartheid South Africa and societies recovering from genocide, such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. At the heart of these processes is a desire to publicly address what happened and deliver some form of justice to survivors and, through these efforts, to foreground accountability, heal society, and reconcile difference—or at least provide space for transparently facing our differences such that they don't descend into insecurity. Transitional justice is also very much in the air in the United States today. For instance, the proposal to establish an investigatory commission to develop a robust and coherent public account of what happened on January 6 at the U.S. Capitol is one very recent example. It's often framed by the imperative to have a shared understanding of what happened there on that day. Going back, though, even over the last few years, U.S. society has wrestled intensely with how we deal with the persistent legacies of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and racism in general. And we all know these debates. Should we rename buildings and institutions originally named for slaveholders? Should we keep monuments in the public square upon which a Confederate military soldier might be perched on a horse? Is the flag of the Confederacy a symbol of Southern heritage or a reminder that the rebel army fought to retain the institution of slavery? Historical journalism work like the *1619 Project* aims to reorient how we think about the founding of this country. Even pop culture shows like *The Watchman* or *Lovecraft County* utilize

historical narratives to contextualize the present in a sophisticated way, looking at intergenerational trauma and even introducing historical events into the canon like the 1921 Tulsa massacre, which I certainly knew nothing about until very recently. I think, furthermore, the establishment of the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian in D.C. and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery that documents lynching for me fall into this category, too, because of their insistence that the Black experience is a core component of the fabric of U.S. society in all its gore, struggle, and joy. It's not that U.S. history that cherry picks or romanticizes the past is wrong; rather, it is incomplete. And in its incompleteness, we are stuck. Without a robust and honest accounting, we cannot and will not move forward to a more equitable society. So, taken together, this is transitional justice—though it remains mostly decentralized and reserved so far for unofficial and cultural spaces. So, to bring this discussion back to campus, I think UD is starting to do this work too. I think of the video from the fall in which President Spina apologized for a letter from a Marianist to W.E.B. Du Bois in 1930 in which the University lied about a refusal to enroll Black students in daytime classes.<sup>2,3</sup> Apology is another area of transitional justice: Think of the way in which Canada apologized to First Nations or the way New Zealand issued a major apology to Indigenous people for their treatment in the past. I think also about the naming of the new computer science building for Jessie Hathcock, the first African American woman to graduate from UD and who was named in the letter to Du Bois. And I wonder how the University's anti-racist statement, the creation of the race and ethnic studies program, and the work in West Dayton figure into a broader reckoning with our past based on repairing relationships and forging new memory as the basis for a more just future. So, finally, I believe that truth telling must be at the center of any institutional transitional justice process, and that is the work we're here to do this week: to share stories

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<sup>2</sup> Gauder, Heidi, and Caroline Waldron. "'The Considerable Number of Students': A Response to W.E.B. Du Bois." University of Dayton Libraries Blog. October 13, 2020. [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/roesch\\_fac/68/](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/roesch_fac/68/)

<sup>3</sup> University of Dayton. "A Letter to W.E.B. Du Bois." October 13, 2020. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TS\\_\\_5j\\_yoU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TS__5j_yoU)

and craft new narratives that are more inclusive, more robust, and more complete, even if they are at times ugly and uncomfortable. They serve a greater constructive and indeed constitutive purpose. We can literally reconstitute and remake ourselves in the process of this work.

## Discussion

**Julius Amin:** Before we get into our discussion, let me take a few minutes to give you an idea of my journey into this conversation. Some of you know I was born and raised in Cameroon in West Africa. I did my undergraduate degree at the University of Cameroon, where this exceptionalism of America was being taught as this wonderful great nation, unique in the world—the arsenal of democracy. But little was being talked about the experiences of African Americans—Blacks in America. When I left the university, I became friends with a Peace Corps volunteer who was in Cameroon—an African American Peace Corps volunteer named Alvin Black. We spent a lot of time talking about what it means to be African American in America. He educated me a lot, and when I arrived in the United States—I went to school in Lubbock, Texas, at Texas Tech University—I realized that no amount of reading, no amount of conversation could have prepared me for the experiences of being Black. No amount of reading. I cannot count how many times in Lubbock when I was referred to as “Boy,” and our friends, whose parents would come from local communities in Texas like Tahoka—their parents worked in cotton plantations, and we would go there and visit their parents, and the conditions were just unbelievable, and the treatment of Blacks by some of these cotton farm owners, was just unbelievable. So I ended up doing a lot of interviews of other Blacks in that community, but also there at the university, there were some real powerful people, Blacks who were so determined to try to get things going, to try to change things, even though their voices were not being heard but they were so determined. I learned so much from them and I was influenced tremendously by them in terms of the things that don’t have to be the way they are. But right from that time again, so many people have seen so many things, and so many more influence how I came to this journey. I remember this elderly person in Texas talking to me when I was interviewing him for a project. He said, “Look, the worst thing to do is to just throw your hands in the air and say, ‘Look things are the way they

are; there's nothing more that can be done. I've done everything I can.' That's the worst thing to do.'" The reason I mention this is that it's really, really important that we hear the story. All the committee members talked about how they came to this journey. It's a really important story for our university. Larry talked about the significance of the curriculum, and Denise, Merida, and Ashleigh all talked about how these stories do matter because whether we like it or not, we are the University of Dayton. We are part of the University of Dayton, and we have that obligation to make the place different. I tell students in my classes all the time: We spend all the time inheriting and benefiting from what the generation before us left. We don't do enough to leave something for the next generation. What are we doing to leave something for the next generation? I'm going to stop talking here and then open it up for questions and comments.

**Amy Lopez-Matthews:** Tom, do you think being the director of the race and ethnic studies program is making an impact on the broader curriculum in the English department? I know that Dr. Lawrence-Sanders talked to SGA last night for a little while about the history department undergoing a review of their curriculum to see how diverse it is and what diverse voices are present. Is that same kind of thing happening in English?

**Tom Morgan:** Race and ethnic studies is based in the College, so from my standpoint, that's an even better thing. I think that bigger-picture placement and that bigger-picture importance is a good thing. The work that I'm doing as director draws upon work that many people here and many people that Dr. James and I talked to were involved in creating—like Dr. Amin and Dr. Donna Cox, long-standing developers of the Africana studies minor. Race and ethnic studies has three minors—Africana studies, Latin American studies, and race and social justice. So in many ways, I'm picking up work that's been done and trying to move it forward. I've been very heartened because I've gotten a significant amount of interest from students. The program started last year, and last year we graduated four minors. This year, in the second year, we will have eight minors that are graduating. A solid start means a lot. We also have our first dedicated class being taught this semester. There's now an introduction to race and ethnic studies, a 200-level class, and it was full. I capped it at 20. There's a fairly large amount of interest

from students specifically to understand the ongoing events that are happening right now in the world. Many don't know what to do, and it's been apparent to me that the program has very disparate audiences. On the one hand, it seeks to validate a particular group of students who have not been validated before—their histories, their experiences that are now reflected in the curriculum. It also then speaks to our white students who want to learn more about this social justice that is our Marianist charism. It's been interesting to see that, and I'm quite happy with the developments. Moving forward, the goal is to create a major. I'm also involved with the diversity institutional learning goal working group. If we think about "Habits of Inquiry and Reflection,"<sup>4</sup> how do we scaffold a series of beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills we'd like our students to develop, and then how do we map our larger curriculum in a way that Dr. Burnley identified? That can be at the curricular and the cocurricular level. There's also comparing and benchmarking what other peer institutions are doing. I've been very happy with the interest I've seen among students; if we're going to be successful in transforming on the faculty and staff side, especially with the faculty side, we have to think interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in ways that create support networks across the University. I think a space like race studies can help do some of that important type of work.

**Dorian Borbonus:** Thank you so much for the different statements that were given at the beginning. I wanted to ask a question of Dr. Burnley because I was very happy to hear about the call for curricular reform. I wholeheartedly support that, and we're working on this already in the history department. My question about inclusive curriculum is how that squares with another important initiative—the Catholic intellectual tradition. I think that the Catholic intellectual tradition can be conceptualized in many different ways. To some people, tradition means a canon, so I think any tradition at least has the potential to prioritize normative content. My question is how to put these two together. If we have curricular reform, that means Common Academic Program (CAP)

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<sup>4</sup> University of Dayton. Provost's Council, "DOC 2006-09 Habits of Inquiry and Reflection: A Report on Education in the Catholic and Marianist Traditions at the University of Dayton. The Marianist Education Working Group, May 5, 2006" (2007). Senate Documents. 23. [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/senate\\_docs/23](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/senate_docs/23)



proposals. CAP proposals in the humanities, in history, in philosophy, in religious studies have to have a definition of how they represent the Catholic intellectual tradition. Do you have a sense for how we can think about the Catholic intellectual tradition so it doesn't work against your call for curricular reform?

**Larry Burnley:** It's a complex question that deserves a complex response. I'll try to take on a portion of it here. I think the Catholic intellectual tradition and those who embrace it and lift that up as normative and in some ways tie it to excellence need to be willing to critique it through multiple lenses. There are ways in which the Catholic intellectual tradition itself privileges particular voices—in what one could argue are Eurocentric ways. And I don't mean to suggest that the fact that it's Eurocentric is somehow poor or negative, but the idea of including other voices or narratives that bring other perspectives and norms and values that could enrich the Catholic intellectual tradition is often met with resistance—a resistance that is motivated by keeping the historically marginalized voices where they are, on the margins, if not totally invisible. It's almost to the point of demonizing and dehumanizing these other narratives and the histories and cultures and historical phenomena that have shaped these other narratives. So I think a reframing our notion of excellence is in order. For example, the Catholic intellectual tradition is tied to this commitment to the common good. How does that actually play itself out? It's not unique to UD, and it's not unique to Catholic higher education. We continually graduate students making the claim that we've given them the very best education, yet still we have these voices that are marginalized. So a question could be, "How do we reconcile a commitment to excellence and being a university for the common good when we produce students who know so little about the histories and contemporary realities of marginalized groups through the lenses and the voices of those groups themselves?" These groups and these individuals offer extraordinary value to not just the Catholic intellectual tradition, but the human intellectual tradition. So I think beginning to come to grips with the inconsistency, the incongruencies, the conflicts, the contradictions will be important. I think the University of Dayton is positioning itself to do that in our work, and I think that can be measured and identified in a number of ways. The conversations going on at the University where we're looking at the

Catholic intellectual tradition through the lens of inclusive excellence—through the lens of historically marginalized groups—are moving us toward actually being more of that community of the common good.

**Allison O’Gorman:** Thank you to all the speakers today. As white students on this campus, how do you think that we can go about making our Black peers feel more comfortable?

**Tom Morgan:** I think probably one of the ways is to listen. Listening is a good way to hear and validate experiences. If we want to break it down to the big picture across intersectional identity, white people are going to have difficulty seeing outside of that white perspective, so the more that they’re able to listen, the better. Second, I would say to challenge yourself in the curriculum and the cocurricular. Look for places in your classes where you can challenge yourself to do more. Don’t just save it for the CAP diversity and social justice class. Think about ways in which you can push yourself, and if you’re really interested, come talk to me about a minor in race and ethnic studies. Join groups on campus looking for different curricular perspectives. You don’t just have to pursue things that you already know; you can find new things to pursue along the way. One of the happiest things about being at the University of Dayton is that the social justice perspective that comes with the Marianist charism has allowed me to push students to think in ways that I did not experience at previous state institutions. I continue to value that opportunity, and I think that’s a good way for students to think about moving some of this workflow.

**Larry Burnley:** I think part of the answer is the willingness of students with dominant identities—in this case we’re talking about race, so I’ll name it as white identities—to be uncomfortable—the willingness to engage in spaces and conversations that go beyond their comfort zone—to experience that and be self-reflective. I encourage students all the time, “Don’t be satisfied with what you’re required to read in pursuit of degrees because oftentimes what you’re required to read does not include in equitable ways those voices that remain on the margins.

**Merida Allen:** And we can work together to look for ways and spaces to get involved in diverse settings and communities. We have a great diversity peer educator program that not only educates students, but helps to empower our community together, so contact Megan Woolf. We’d love to work together with you.

**Julius Amin:** Let me also just add a little something to the interest of students. Based on my experience teaching at UD for many years, there is an appetite for students to engage in these conversations. I think it's up to us to challenge students, to lead that direction of helping our students to think differently. Because these are issues they deal with. Sometimes it's difficult as faculty—we may end up saying the wrong thing—but increasingly now, there are resources in every department. This issue is here; it's not going anywhere. We as a university have that obligation to help our students and introduce them because they're going to go out there to the world, and they should not be experiencing or seeing or learning or hearing about these things for the first time. I mentioned before that there were students who participated in the summer 2020 protests, and they were asking questions: “Why don't we know about this stuff? Why don't we learn about this stuff?” And that is something we should take seriously because as a historian, I say that sometimes history is shaped by moments. So 2020 was a moment, and we have some discoveries because of that moment. The University was going toward being an anti-racist university, but that moment pushed things. My point is that race and racism are messy. It puts people on the defensive. The conversation is messy, but it's a conversation we must have. History itself is messy. We should not be afraid to move into uncharted territory. In my class today—I teach the history of South Africa—several students were asking, “How could it be possible, at the turn of the 20th century, that South Africa was developing some of its racial policies from lessons in America?” The students were doubting that. There are issues that have to be addressed, and we have the obligation to push students to address some of these issues.

**Denise James:** One of the things that I always worry about when we have discussions about race here at the University of Dayton—especially when we're talking about anti-Black racism—and that I'll broach here to this group and probably every time someone talks to me about this—is that often, we frame these conversations around issues of comfort and belonging. Some philosophy is interested in questions of belonging. We center certain experiences and marginalize others, even as we have conversations about belonging and inclusion, and the assumption often is that students do not know or have not heard or have not experienced exclusion or a lack of belonging, when the truth is that there is a subset

of our students that do know—that have experience—and that is the center of their experience at the University. So one of the things that I tell people—especially colleagues who ask, “Well, how do I talk about these tough issues in class?” and, “What do I do?”—one approach is to try our best to de-normalize, de-center, and get rid of our understanding of who belongs. We communicate this belief that everyone who shows up belongs, but that complicates the history. Earlier, we mentioned thinking about the University’s past when it comes to integration, and we have a perspective of what the University said about Jessie Hathcock’s experience here and what it means in present day to name the computer science building for her,<sup>5</sup> and it’s often a conversation that really does assume a certain normalized type of knower and subject. Part of what we can do—when we’re teaching, when we’re talking to students, when we’re talking to our colleagues—is show up first with the really radical assumption that we all belong, and all of those histories, all those experiences are part of us being in this place. Doing that—and I had to think a lot about how I was going to reteach myself part of my training, which is in traditional Western social, political philosophy—is not necessarily about welcoming new people or that we are learning something new, but rather opening up our understanding and our frame to all of the folks that are here and to think about how to prepare for other folks to come. That really does shift, especially when we’re talking about issues of race and how we approach it. We often assume we’re teaching just to the people who don’t have experience with racism, but actually, we’re teaching to folks who have experienced having prejudicial views; we’re teaching to folks who have experience of racism themselves. I would challenge us, when we’re talking about educating the University and learning things from our past, to really open ourselves to the understanding that lots of people have been here, and what does it mean when some of us are no longer here, and what does it mean when some of us pass out of our world of knowers that we have on campus? I think a lot of what we’re going to talk about in our session with faculty

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<sup>5</sup> “Computer Science Building to Honor Jessie S. Hathcock, First African American Woman UD Graduate.” University of Dayton news release.  
[https://udayton.edu/news/articles/2021/01/computer\\_science\\_building\\_named\\_to\\_honor\\_first\\_african\\_american\\_woman\\_ud\\_graduate.php](https://udayton.edu/news/articles/2021/01/computer_science_building_named_to_honor_first_african_american_woman_ud_graduate.php)

and staff will have to do with some of the ways in which we lose part of our community, and we need to rediscover those things.

**Merida Allen:** Just to build on that, part of my dissertation research is around intergroup communication, so I'm really interested in the ways in which we're socialized to communicate within and across groups. Part of what I think we as an institution have to remember is the language we use and the ways in which we communicate with and across groups. We have been socialized to talk about helping others build—such as helping students of color build community—but really, that takes the responsibility from the institution, which should be providing the space and should be providing the connections and the opportunities. Instead it's putting that accountability and that responsibility on those said groups who feel less seen, heard, and felt. We do have to remember our institutional voice and who we represent as individuals. That's something we in MEC often really think about. It's not the students' responsibility to identify their resources; it's our responsibility to provide them and to help build those connections. It's for them to commit—but that's another conversation.

**Larry Burnley:** The question that comes up for me is, “How do we create policies and practices that help build institutional capacity to go down this road?” Even in the Anti-Racism Action Plan, there's missed language. We invite people into these spaces where we're having these difficult conversations, and we look at the demographics of people who are actually coming into the spaces where we're talking about race and gender, LGBTQ identities, and systemic oppression, etc. Most of us aren't showing up. But now we're moving from invitation to expectation. We're developing policy where there's an expectation across the University that we're building the capacity, and we're entering spaces that will make all of us in many different ways uncomfortable. Building the capacity to do that is extremely difficult, but it's one that has to be made. And what we're seeing now is being met with significant resistance; we're doing these assessments across the life of the University tied to user-level strategic planning. Emerging voices are measurable and identifiable in terms of the resistance, and there's language and ideological perspectives that are reminiscent of kind of a Trumpian mindset right here at the University. But I think it's the journey that needs to be taken to how we learn and how we move into

that space of tension; these conversations are part of the working experience here. They're not really an option; they're required and necessary to be the university that we're saying God is calling us to be.

**Julius Amin:** So, what does it mean to be a University of Dayton student or a University of Dayton graduate when it comes to issues of race? What does it mean to be an American? What are we trying to do here at the University in terms of race? Based on your perspective, what does it mean to be a University of Dayton student, or where would you want a University of Dayton student to be on this topic? It will take the combined effort of all of us to create or to move us to a particular place. Where is that place that we want our students to be?

**Denise James:** For me, when I think about the purpose of this symposium and the types of engagement we have with students and classes around these things, part of what I'm always interested in as a philosopher is how folks are thinking through becoming actively interested in these vitally important issues and topics because of what it means for people to flourish in the world. I am interested in where we are engaging with one another in these very important conversations, and how that is different at a university than in other settings. Our students live together. There are ways we can engage them in the classroom, in the cocurricular programs, in the residential curriculum. One of my favorite thinkers of all time is Lorraine Hansberry, and she once wrote in a diary that she just wanted time to think. For me the philosopher, we need to give students the places, the times, the space to think through these things. Often what I fear is that we sometimes get really committed to this goal-based, destination-based education and don't give people the space and time to think through these things.

**Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders:** To build off Denise's point, I can speak to my position as an educator and as a professor who teaches primarily African American history courses and sees the space and places that the students come from with a lot of hunger and interest. There are a lot of stops along the path. One of the first things I do in my classes is ask, "What African American history have you had?" And we get everything from, "Zip—nothing," to an occasional couple of students who are like, "Actually, I took a full course in African American history"—that's rare, by the way. Throughout the semester, students' relationship to the material changes. You can see in some of them how it's changing their

worldview in real time. And for some this is profoundly disruptive because it's upending everything they thought they knew. Inside a university environment, my role as a professor is to respect student journeys along this way in a really patient way that maybe I would not be outside of the academy or if I were dealing with grown adults in their 30s, 40s, and 50s—to be super patient with my students who are like, “Wow I didn't know this thing,” or they're dealing with intergenerational conflicts in their own families around a lot of these ideas—working out disruption between them and their intimate relationships and their parents and their siblings and these people who believe different things than they do. I can help guide them through this through history, but history can only do so much. By the end of the semester, I want all of my students to know and understand history better. Some of them will come out of it profoundly changed. Some of them, depending on their own backgrounds, receive confirmation of things that they felt already but didn't really have the history to actually illuminate what these things were—to say that these are facts, that these are things that have actually happened. Some may not be changed at all. I hope that my class is not going to be their only engagement with the histories of marginalized people because there's so much more out there to learn. What I hope I can do is make them interested in learning that this is just one slice of the story.

**Tom Morgan:** If we're thinking about ways we can engage, two points I've found in the last couple years have helped our students think differently and helped me think differently. One is the American Literature Survey class. Oftentimes, it's seen as a memorization process—you read a bunch of authors, and you garner their bits of knowledge and move on. The last couple of years, I've reframed it, and rather than just thinking about it as American literature, I have taught with a settler-colonialism framework, which makes students reconsider every text, important or not, from a different lens. And what does it mean to think about that as a foundational lens for this country? How does that give us different types of questions to ask about primary texts? For example, we think about the Declaration of Independence, that Thomas Jefferson struggled with the idea of slavery. And people, those who ratified it, cut that part out and left it out. No one ever thinks about the “merciless Indian savages” paragraph that describes Native Americans,

which was uncommented on and left intact and is still intact. That's, for me, a particular place where you can have very different conversations bringing that as a framework for all texts. That's one classroom intervention. The other one is more methodological. What allowed white people to act, behave, and think that they are superior, I think, is an important question to ask all of our students to contemplate. Ideally, I'm posing questions that will continue to challenge students—or as they challenge me.

**Julius Amin:** One of the reasons I was trying to make a point too is that I teach African history. I always gauge students at the beginning: When they hear of Africa, what comes to their mind? I have them write it on a card, and I tell them not to write their names on the card. Over the years, I've seen all kinds of ideas. And toward the end of the semester, they can talk about Africa differently; their conversations have changed. Of course, some hold on to those views because you can do the research on the Internet and find evidence supporting anything. My point here becomes justice. We need to continue to encourage these conversations, and our students will gain from these conversations and think about race and racism differently.

Again, I want to thank you very much. We have a great lineup. Tomorrow, we are listening to the student session in the morning and then in the afternoon we have alumni voices, and then on Wednesday morning we have faculty and staff perspective. In the afternoon we have testimonials, and in the evening, we will listen to our keynote speaker. On Thursday morning we have closing arguments, the path forward—where we go from here.



## Student Voices

*Maleah A. Wells, Amira Fitzpatrick, Kaitlin Hall,  
Joshua Chambers, Christopher Jones, Nyah Johnson*

This begins with reflections from student research assistants who moderated the session. This session introduces the major issues which will be addressed during the symposium.

### **Moderator: Maleah A. Wells**

I'm currently senior with a major in history and minors in Africana studies and psychology. Also, I am finishing my term as vice president of



*Maleah Wells*

Black Action Through Unity. This spring semester, I participated as a student research assistant for the Symposium on Race. My research focused on the experiences of Black students on campus within the last five to six years. The goal was pick up where the last symposium left off regarding the Black experience here. My research consisted of articles, websites, *Flyer News*, and other news outlets that mentioned the University of Dayton with regard to racial issues.

Being a history major, when doing research like this, nothing really surprises me. What I enjoyed the most was looking at past student activism on campus. Looking at the progress of Black student leaders and activists within the last few years was inspiring. I have served on the BATU executive board for two years and have been a member for three

years. BATU was involved in a lot on campus, and it allowed me to reflect on past accomplishments. What really helped is that at the same time I was doing research for the symposium, I was also completing my senior capstone on a similar topic, the Black studies movement. I was able to make a lot of connections with the past student activism and the present. The fight to make UD a more equitable institution for Black students has been long and doesn't look to be anywhere near over.

Some things that I observed were that Black students do a lot for the University, and most times, they have nothing to show for it. The University loves to talk with Black students, use them for pictures, and use their stories for recruitment and donations but does little to support Black students. I feel that if the University really cared, they would allocate funds to MEC, Black organizations, Black spaces, scholarships, and the Africana Studies program. The University is great at talking about anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion but does the minimum of acting on it. Another issue that I have with the University is that they don't have a relationship with Dayton Public Schools students. Why is it that UD doesn't interact with local high schoolers in the area? I'm not talking about Chaminade Julianne or Alter; I am referring to Meadowdale, Dunbar, Ponitz, etc. It makes no sense that high schoolers in the Dayton Public Schools don't have access to an institution located in their own backyard. I also hate the fact that the only scholarship available to them is the McIntosh scholarship, which is only available to one student in the entire district of five or six different high schools—but have the audacity to bring elementary school students from DPS to come for Christmas on Campus.

## **Moderator: Amira Fitzpatrick**

When Dr. Morgan first sent me the application description to be a research assistant for the 2021 Symposium on Race, I was ecstatic that



*Amira Fitzpatrick*

someone had considered me for this position. I was eager to get started working and was excited to be able to contribute to something greater than myself, particularly on a subject I am so passionate about. So many of my peers whom I look up to have already been heavily involved in racial justice on our campus, and I was very excited to be blessed with the opportunity to engage with this and contribute in my own way.

When I first started working, I had no idea where my research would lead me or how it would contribute to the overall symposium. Focusing on alumni experiences, it was hard to do research because, obviously, alumni are no longer on campus. I focused my research on the archives and on social media, looking for prominent alumni during their time at UD and what sort of things they were experiencing then, in efforts to compare it to now. As a sociology and criminal justice double-major with a minor in Africana studies, as well as a Black female student who has grown up in predominantly white spaces her entire life, I am fascinated with the way stories intersect throughout race and gender as well as across the experiences of students. Although disheartening, it is very much validating to know that people are going through and went through the same things I have been through my entire life.

Planning for the symposium was equally as exciting. I enjoy planning and creating schedules, so I was really thankful to be a part of the planning and facilitation of some sessions. I hope that in the future I can do more to organize and contribute. Attending the sessions throughout the week, it was really refreshing to see many of my classmates at sessions. I also got to virtually eat lunch with the keynote speaker, Dr. Shannen Dee Williams. I was really thankful for the

opportunity to sit down with her and pick her brain regarding Catholicism and the Black Lives Matter movement.

I don't know what it looks like to continue our work into the future, but I am hopeful that I can continue contributing to this project. I have enjoyed getting to work with the students and faculty on this project and have appreciated the support and encouragement from everyone. It would be amazing to host another symposium next year so that it could be in person, but if it is not for another four years, I can't wait to see what new discoveries students (and hopefully full-time staff) are able to uncover and highlight in future symposiums.

### **Panelists**

- Kaitlin Hall
- Joshua Chambers
- Christopher Jones
- Nyah Johnson

### **Discussion**

**Maleah Wells:** My name is Maleah Wells, and I'm a third-year senior history major with minors in Africana studies and psychology. I'm also a research assistant and vice president of Black Action Through Unity.

**Amira Fitzpatrick:** My name is Amira Fitzpatrick. I am a junior studying sociology and criminal justice with a minor in Africana studies. I'm also a research assistant, and I'm involved with too many things on campus. You probably see me at the Rec all the time and other organizations as well. Thank you, everyone, for coming today. We're going to introduce our panelists:

- Kaitlin Hall is a second-year discover science major striving to double major in sociology and human rights. She is the vice president of community outreach for the Multicultural Programming Council, a member of the campus unity committee, and a member of Black Action Through Unity.
- Nyah Johnson is a sophomore mechanical engineering technology major from Indianapolis. She is part of RHA (Residential Housing Association), where she serves as one of the vice presidents in VWK (Virginia W. Kettering Residence Hall). She is also a

member of BATU and is one of the MEP (Minority Engineering Program) ambassadors, where she serves as an outreach coordinator.

- Joshua Chambers is a senior from Tinley Park, Illinois, pursuing a degree in international business management with a concentration in global markets. He is the director of the multicultural business leaders' program, which seeks to provide mentorship, guidance, and professional advancement to multicultural business students at the University of Dayton.
- Christopher Jones is a second-year theater major working toward switching to a pre-med major with a theater minor. He's from Philadelphia and is currently the president of the Multicultural Programming Council, a member of Black Action Through Unity, a Common Good Player, and a resident assistant in Marycrest Complex.

### **What made you choose UD?**

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you so much, Amira, for the introductions. The first question is: What made you choose UD?

**Nyah Johnson:** My first visit to UD was for Women in Engineering overnight, and it was a bunch of white people, honestly. So that kind of turned me away from going to UD, and then my mom told me that UD had the multicultural overnight, which was with previously OMA (Office of Multicultural Affairs, now known as MEC, the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center). So when I went to that overnight it kind of changed my viewpoint on UD, and I could actually see people like me, so going to that overnight really helped play a huge part.

**Kaitlin Hall:** I'm from the South, so when I was coming to UD, it was actually my first visit because I was going to a university up in Michigan, and UD was just on the way. I had a pretty traumatic high school experience being from the South, and like there are not many people that look like me or even just care about me. So when I first came to UD, it just reminded me so much of my high school, and I just didn't want to come here. It wasn't until I started getting emails from MEC, and then I started going to the MEC overnight, the STEM camp, and the orientation through MEC. In that, I really started seeing how the center really

supported me. I decided to come to UD because of it, and I'm so glad I made that decision.

**Joshua Chambers:** UD wasn't on my radar in terms of on my collegiate list, but I actually have a mentor who was an alumni here. He reached out to me as I was going through my college decisions and everything. He asked me what I was looking for, and then he suggested UD, and I kind of went from there. From that, we ended up doing a visit—he actually brought me down to the campus. I then got to meet with Ms. Henderson. Kathleen Henderson actually played a big pivotal role in my decision coming to the University. She brought me around, gave me a tour of the campus. I didn't have much to do in Chicago, and they gave me the opportunity to kind of see what was going on.

At first, I didn't see myself in the University, and then we walked by the BATU house. I didn't know that's what it was at the time, but I met with a lot of the Black students on campus and then got to see from them more of what the University actually is like and why they chose it, so their stories actually impacted my decision.

**Christopher Jones:** Being all the way from Philly, I never really heard of Dayton, and my mom was an alumna. So when it was time to start applying for colleges she kind of sprung that on me. Like Nyah said, the MEC overnight is what did it for me. Coming here, spending the night and being with other students of color, I just really connected with them quickly even though I didn't know any of them. But the ability to just connect with them real quick and to have a good time and also the view of the campus as well, I felt at home right away as soon as stepping on campus, so it just felt right for me. That is why I chose UD.

### **What was your initial reaction on campus?**

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you all for sharing. My next question is: What was your initial reaction when stepping foot on campus? What was that like?

**Kaitlin Hall:** Again, UD reminded me of my high school, so it wasn't really too big of a difference. For my mom—my mom grew up in the north side of Nashville, which is a historically Black neighborhood, so she was a little nervous for me—it was like, "Too many white people here—are you sure you'll be OK?" I was like, "Mom, I'm going to be

fine.” So that was my mom’s reaction, but for me, UD reminded me a lot about my high school.

**Christopher Jones:** When I first came to campus, it was to come check in for the overnight, so we had arrived a little early before check in. We were just driving around the neighborhood, and my mom was reminiscing about old times, but in my head, I was just like, “Where are all the Black students?” I think we drove past one Black student. I was like, “I know there’s more than this,” but I’m just like, “Where are they?” So that was my initial reaction

**Joshua Chambers:** I think I had a great night.

**Nyah Johnson:** When I first came, it wasn’t really a culture shock because I grew up with a lot of white people in my school. It wasn’t really as shocking to me. It was just like I only saw one (Black student) and I’m like, “Where’s everyone else?” But everyone here is so friendly, so that kind of relieves a little bit of stress that I had.

**Joshua Chambers:** It wasn’t necessarily like a culture shock; I came from a pretty diverse high school. It was a Catholic high school in Chicago Heights. We had mainly white students, but it was also a decent mix of Black and Hispanic students. Coming to UD it wasn’t a culture shock; it was just a difference of the proportions and the range of diversity. At first, there was a general warm feeling. I visited the University of Kansas as well, which is a much larger campus, but it was just like a New York-style environment—everyone’s on a high pace. When I came here, there was a big shift in terms of—you know, the opening the door thing. Just to know that I’m another student or another person on your campus and having that hospitable attitude is what really did it for me.

### **As Black students, what resources have helped you?**

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you all for sharing my next question is: As Black students, what are some of the resources that have helped you so far here at UD?

**Nyah Johnson:** Getting to know my professors well enough to actually like go to them when I actually need help. Everyone who comes from MEC and the Faculty and staff members actually show that they

support multicultural students and are actually there for us when we need it.

**Joshua Chambers:** I definitely agree that MEC is one of the top resources for me. Quite honestly, it's a second home. And just feel like I can truly be myself. But outside of that, I would say, like Nyah said, I like that the staff support students in that space. I see Dr. Burnley here today. He's been one of the big resources for me, where gives me wisdom from his own his own life. And Amy Lopez-Matthews—I see her in here as well—her support with some difficult situations and being there in those times. I would say the staff has been one of the things I like that gives you the most comfort. Especially from a housing standpoint—so, like, having the ability to reach out to Mr. Steve Herndon and having him as a resource for me has been a major benefit.

**Kaitlin Hall:** For me, definitely the staff. I think that has been the most helpful resource. Definitely MEC staff because, again, I grew up in the South. I was one of the only and the oldest person of color at my high school my senior year, so when tension started happening between our administration and students of color, it felt at that time like it was my job to make sure to help both sides. That was really scary for a 19-year-old senior who didn't know anything. So just to come to UD and see the MEC staff that are of color and knowing that if something happens, I know I can go to the MEC staff and just be like, "This is what happened to me. Who do I need to talk to?" and have that support. And the UD staff—everyone is so welcoming and supportive about anything that I need.

**Christopher Jones:** I'm another one for the MEC staff. Coming in my freshman year, first semester, still growing and becoming, like, a better person, I know the MEC staff would always get me straight whenever I was doing something out of pocket or I'm just being weird. But also the other MEC students as well, especially like the upperclassmen like Josh, Maleah, and Amira have taught me so many things and helped me through so many problems. It's just like what Josh said earlier—a big family. I see it more as like big brothers and sisters because I'm the youngest in my family, so being away from my family's still a little weird to me. But knowing that I have the MEC staff and other students here who want to see me thrive and excel in my work makes me



feel much better to be here and know that people have my back and are here to support me.

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you guys so much for sharing. Yeah, it seems MEC is a huge center for a lot of us. So, the next questions are going to be a little bit deeper, just to let you know so it's not a shock or anything.

### **Have you had any encounters with racism or prejudice?**

**Maleah Wells:** My next question is: While being on campus, have you had any encounters with racism or prejudice?

**Joshua Chambers:** Short answer, yes, it's been a couple times, but there have been more good times than bad times, I will say thankfully. In the bad times, even though you remember them, they're overshadowed by the other situations that I've been fortunate enough to have. Also, even in those bad times, I've been grateful for the fact that I don't go through them alone. That's one of the keys for me. Like in one of the experiences I had, having Black Action Through Unity (BATU) really step up on my behalf and be that support base for me, as well as other Black students just letting me know like, "Hey, what happened wasn't OK, and I don't want you to feel like you just need to, you know, sit with it on your own shoulders." Also the staff, going to bat for me at times I needed it, sitting there through processes of, you know, reporting, documentation, hearings, and things of that nature. Having that base and knowing that you're not dealing with this on your own has been a big resource for those times.

**Christopher Jones:** So far in my time here at UD, I haven't really experienced much racism, but in terms of that, I also feel like being known on campus or, at least on my floor last year, was an issue for me. I was the only student of color on my floor. At some point, everyone on my floor just stopped talking to me. I would walk past and not even get a simple hello. I kind of just pushed myself away from my floor. There were times where I just would stay out all night until I was ready to go to sleep, and I went back to my room. My RA really didn't help either because he didn't really care about anything, and I guess he didn't see there was an issue going on. But yeah, I just kind of felt isolated somewhat and alone on my floor, and it was kind of hard to talk about because I didn't know if anyone else had the same experience.

**Nyah Johnson:** I kind of have the same answer as Chris. I have not experienced it, but I know people who have experienced it, and I know whenever they brought it up, the issue was handled quickly, which is something that I really admire about the UD staff—like they’re able to acknowledge when they’ve done wrong and then be able to fix it and make sure nothing like that ever happens again.

**Kaitlin Hall:** In my freshman year, I remember sitting in my room, and my neighbors were partying. Like, I’m the only Black person on my floor, so you can imagine my shock when I heard one of the white boys yelling the N-word. That was just a shock to me. So, I ran over there and knocked on the door, and I didn’t even know what to say. I just yelled like, “If I hear anyone say that word again, I am going to report you guys.” I ended up telling one of the upperclassmen, and she ended up reporting it, filling out an incident report, but it made that living space so uncomfortable to live in. After that incident, I had to move residence dorms, and then that same thing happened to my freshman mentee.

So, I had to kind of like had to relive it through her and help her and support her in a way that I didn’t have when I went through it. I didn’t really have someone else who went through that experience to support me, so it was a little traumatic. But I hope that throughout my time here at Dayton, we tried to help educate people to the use of language, and that these walls are really thin. I don’t think a lot of people realize that, but it is one experience that I had.

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you all for sharing. I’m glad that you were able to get the support and the help that you needed in order to cope with your situations because I know exactly how that feels, and I can definitely relate to all of you.

### **Social media: Any experiences about race and social justice?**

**Maleah Wells:** The next question is: Within the last few years, a lot of incidents on UD’s social media have pertained to students of color and alumni. Have you had any personal experiences with alumni on social media when it comes to race and social justice?

**Kaitlin Hall:** I haven’t, but my mom has. My mom is very active in the parent Facebook page, so during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, she posted on the Facebook page about Black Lives Matter,

and the moderator deleted her posts because they didn't want to be political or have tension between all the parents, so it was kind of disheartening because you would think a bunch of adults could handle reading a Black Lives Matter post, but it was causing some tension in the Facebook group.

**Nyah Johnson:** I personally was not a part of that, but I did see it on a particular UD post that was made toward the beginning or middle of last semester. A lot of people were disagreeing with a lot of viewpoints on the students on campus, and I think UD—whoever runs the UD page—handled this situation well.

**Joshua Chambers:** I also haven't had any personal experiences with it. Until this past year, I've kept my personal pages private, but then recently I just let my page be public. I didn't want to engage part of that until having to really stand up for one of my other friends, hearing their side of it, and knowing that if they would have had other students stepping in on their behalf, it would have felt easier. That's why I kind of took that approach.

**Christopher Jones:** Like the others, I really didn't have any much experience unless I was agreeing with what someone else has said. But I would read the comments at least, I've seen what alumni said. It was just kind of crazy because you wouldn't think alumni would be saying like things like that, especially under the school they went to, and it's just crazy how quickly they are to come back at current students.

### **What is your perspective when it comes to alumni?**

**Maleah Wells:** To that question, a lot of the comments made by alumni are very disheartening and honestly on the racist side as well. I've seen comments where they've talked about us being the other or, "Our voices don't matter"—that we're terrorists and stuff like that. When you see those comments, how does that make you feel? What is your perspective when it comes to alumni?

**Christopher Jones:** To see comments like those is just really sad to see because no matter our skin color, we're still students here at the University of Dayton, how you were a student at University of Dayton, so for you to attack the current students—especially the students of color, because of course there's not a lot of us—it's just really sad just to see

that. Then also the University—they don't always take it down or just don't get to it in enough time. Sometimes there's been times where I'm like, "Just turn the comment section off," or something like that. Usually one or a few racist comments do get in, and it's just like, "Are you going to leave it there or are you going to delete it?" Where are we holding people at the University of Dayton accountable, and how are we holding the alumni accountable?

**Joshua Chambers:** I definitely agree with what Chris said. It's difficult to see those comments from alumni, and honestly, it's kind of weird because if you came to UD, I know for a fact you went through some of the same lessons and teachings that we're going through. So you have the understanding, but it's that you care so much about your point that you're willing to discredit and neglect the students that are still here. But the side that I wish they would understand is the trauma that they're inflicting on these students. All they're trying to do is just go to class, get their degree, and one day be in the corporate world that you're currently living in and, you know, thriving in. But that is really the side of ignorance, to think that your comments don't have an impact on someone.

**Kaitlin Hall:** I think Chris and Josh really explained everything I would I would have said.

### **What support could improve Black student experiences during the pandemic?**

**Maleah Wells:** COVID 19 has disproportionately affected communities of color. How have your experiences in the last year been impacted by COVID and your experiences being a Black student? So, what type of practices or support could improve Black student experiences during the pandemic?

**Kaitlin Hall:** Last year I got really sick, and not only because of COVID, but also I have a hard time with my immune system. So when we switched over to Zoom, I got really scared about how I was falling behind in my classes and how it would impact my transcript. I got scared because if I get lower grades or my GPA was not looking as great, I thought people were going to interpret my transcript as being lazy or that I didn't care anymore. I thought my transcript and my grades were going

to tell a whole different story about me. So that stress of trying to make sure I get all my classes in and make sure that I get the best grades possible just really added to my stress level. The stress actually made me a lot sicker to the point where I had to drop out of two classes last year. UD does a really good job, I think, with academic support—but that mental health portion needs to go hand in hand. I wish they would see it more hand in hand, but right now the University has it separate. Hopefully we can bring those together. I think it would be really helpful for people.

**Nyah Johnson:** I agree with Kaitlyn on the mental health because it seems like since we're online now, the professors think that we have a lot more time to do work, which isn't necessarily the case because we're still seeing the same amount of classes that we normally would. We should not have more work just because we're doing everything online, and then COVID also kind of ruined the College experience. Not ruined—but not being able to see my peers and work with them face to face is something that COVID has messed up. I think UD is doing a really good job of helping us make sure that we're not letting COVID ruin our experience. They have those campus late night events—those CAB events, which, if you really want to get out of your dorm, then it's just something for us to go to. Then being able to go to the MEC lounge and see people just to make sure everyone's doing OK is something that is helping some students to get through these difficult times.

**Joshua Chambers:** I definitely agree with what Nyah said, but I think that when we reopened the MEC space even at limited capacity, it helped a lot of Black students and multicultural students in general. It's been difficult to not see your friends, and not just from a social standpoint, but there's a level where, when you don't get to engage with other people, it's going to do something to you on a mental level, and it's the side that we don't get to address most times. It's hit home for me too, because I've had some family members who've have battled with COVID. Unfortunately, one of my family members actually didn't make it through it. We need to be safe, first—I am fully aware of that—but it's also that your mental health is just as important as your physical health. And I know I don't want to be controversial with that, but I'm trying to figure out what the solution is. I'm just hoping that one day there is some return to normalcy because it does take a toll, not having the real time to

for office hours with your professors. Some do have office hours, but when you have 30 students who now all can log in at whatever time they want to, and you're not having that one-on-one capability, it does change the dynamic. There are some questions you're not going to want to ask in front of a group. Then emailing gets very difficult because things get lost in text, as we all know.

**Christopher Jones:** I feel like everyone has said amazing things. I definitely agree. When we got sent home, one of my math professors was already difficult to work with in person. When we went virtual, it kind of just made him 1,000 times worse. It was, like, the second week of being online and he was already sending email about how we need to stop using Internet that doesn't work. We're having all these different issues, and he acted like we lived in all the same house or the same area. So, luckily, there are professors who did understand, but now I feel like professors definitely have a better grasp on the virtual and blended classes. I agree with what Josh said about MEC opening back up. Before COVID, I used to talk to everyone and have conversations, just walk in and out whenever I needed to. Being able to see the faces in person again is highly appreciated and is a blessing within itself. Besides the vaccines, there is really no definite answer on how we can make it better.

### **How has the residential experience been during COVID-19?**

**Maleah Wells:** As a follow up question, some of you are probably living on campus at the moment or work for residence life as an RA. How has that experience been for you, being a student of color working for residence life or living in the residence halls during COVID-19? As we could see at the beginning of last semester, a lot of our white peers were out partying, going to very compact restaurants and stuff like that. How has that been for you all?

**Christopher Jones:** So, they're still doing that, and working as an RA is kind of difficult because we can only do so much because it's not like we can throw them in their rooms, lock them in and throw away the key. So, it's kind of just like we can just enforce the policy, and if they listen, they listen, and if they don't, they don't. They'll probably just get written up. Again, we just do the best we can, but then it definitely gets hard when students who most likely are under the influence of alcohol or

some type of drug decide to get hostile. Especially with male students; they get rough and loud. It's a scary situation because again, they don't even have a mask on. So now with COVID happening, you're being yelled at in your face by someone who doesn't have a mask on. You're just concerned whether they might hit you or something. We're just doing our job, just doing what is asked of us, and we're trying to keep you safe. Although you may not like that you are getting written up, again, it's our job. So it's definitely been hard on RAs. I feel like it's also been hard on students who aren't RAs because of the whole "You can't have guests" and "You can't go in other people's rooms." So I do sympathize for these other students, especially the first-years because that first year is about connecting with other students on campus.

**Kaitlin Hall:** Just to piggyback off of Chris because I'm also an RA, I visualize that my residents hate me because I am very much like, "If I see or hear a guest, we're going to have a conversation," and I stuck to my work because I definitely did have conversations with some of my residents about having guests. In talking about the seriousness of it, especially when we had almost 800 people on campus with COVID, it was a real serious time to just be like, "I'm not playing because I'm not having a COVID floor." Especially as someone who has an autoimmune disease. If I get it I'm basically going to be sick for months, like it's going to take me like a year to the recover. I don't have that privilege to stay at home to do my schoolwork; I have to be here on campus. So, you have to recognize that not everyone can go home or has a home where they can safely sit, or has a quiet area to do their work. So I also try to make sure my residents know that it is a privilege to be on campus. In the beginning of the year, especially when we have 800 COVID cases, there was a lot of tension between RAs and public safety because it felt like RAs were doing more than public safety. It even got to the point where Ras—especially the ones in the neighborhoods—saw public safety with no mask on, and there was on case where we had one neighborhood fellow ask a public safety officer to put his mask on, and he said, "I can't wear a mask because then I can't shoot people." We were all like, "Who are you? Who on campus are you shooting? Like, who are you trying to shoot on campus?" Even Eric Spina had to be brought into that conversation in that space. It was just so stressful because it feels like we

have to keep everyone safe, but also we have to be the main source of comfort for everyone else during this time.

**Joshua Chambers:** Being in the housing department is almost like being on the front lines for the University. As a desk assistant, my experiences are slightly different than a resident assistant's, but it's been difficult in terms of having to try and control those who choose to move around you know, without their masks. I see students coming off the elevator, and there are times when you can tell by their demeanor if they are not going to be receptive to being asked whether they will or will not put on a mask. Sometimes there's an emboldened attitude, where they may have a mentality where they feel that they don't have to or that they shouldn't be asked to. So, like trying to really get it through, like, "Listen I get that you have your own perspective on this situation, but for my safety, would you just do the courtesy of just putting your mask on? Like, that's all we're asking." We don't get enough understanding from the students. You signed the contract. You signed the Path Forward statement. You knew what was going on when you came back to campus. You signed it, and if you signed it without reading your contract, that's on you.

**Nyah Johnson:** I agree with what everyone else has said. They are still partying, so it'll get to the point where I'm about to go to bed, and it's still going. I have to leave my room because I live in VWK, and I can hear the people across the hall from my room. I don't want to get out of bed and go tell them that they need to quiet down because I don't want to be seen as that angry Black woman, but I'm also trying to go to sleep. They know that we have quiet hours and that they should follow the quiet hours because, like Josh said, they signed the contract before moving in. Then also VWK has an issue with people tearing down exit signs and ceiling tiles, and everyone in the building has to pay for it. I want to say it's not the minorities, because they can pick us out, and they're going to remember us because there's not too many of us. So just having to suffer as a student of color and being watched all the time is something that I also feel is happening in my residence hall. A lot of students have already had COVID before, so they're using that as an excuse, like, "Oh, I can do this because I've already had it before." I'm like, "What about the people around you?" Like everyone has said, we



can't afford to go home because we can't take that back to our parents and our family members.

### **What are your thoughts on an anti-racism event in 2020?**

**Maleah Wells:** Thank you all so much for sharing. We have a few more questions left. Last year in 2020, students hosted an anti-racism demonstration. What were your initial thoughts on that event, and how was that experience for you as a Black student being in that space if you were there?

**Joshua Chambers:** For me, I was just really proud of the work that was put in. Jada Brown was one of the spearheads of getting that set up. I want to applaud her first for the work that she did on that. It took a lot, as a student who's still in classes to coordinate an entire event not just for the Black students, but for the entire campus and then seeing the support that we had from our white counterparts. That did a lot for me to know that I'm not fighting this fight alone. That was one thing that I really appreciated. Then getting the support from the Dayton community as well and having some alumni come back from the surrounding area to show their support—I really appreciated it.

**Christopher Jones:** I agree with what Josh said. I was asked to speak at the event, so when I got up there to speak, I'm just seeing not only like the multicultural students, but also seeing the white students on campus. It was like, "OK, now we're definitely not alone in this," and that there's people that actually do care about this and see this as an issue and are here to help with that issue. I definitely got a lot out of it. Everyone who spoke I found very knowledgeable as well because some things I wasn't aware of myself. It was just amazing how everyone came together for this event.

**Kaitlin Hall:** I helped Jada Brown plan the event, and it was just an amazing experience to be in that group that was planning and coming up with ideas and just being able to support and uplift each other and be able to uplift voices. The student march on campus was incredible because I remember in high school, we tried to do a March for Our Lives movement—just a quick everyone walks out of school for 15 minutes because of recent school shootings. My friend who was trying to organize it almost got threatened to be expelled from school for just

doing something as simple as walking out for 15 minutes and going back to class. So just to see this huge difference of how the University quickly approved everything and got everything together, it was just incredible, and I hope that we can continue to do more events like that and spread more awareness.

**Nyah Johnson:** I was not able to attend because I had an exam that day; if I didn't I would have gone. Just seeing the campus come together on social media was something really amazing. I didn't really know how many how many people would actually come to the event, and just seeing the turnout was such an amazing thing that I wish I could have been a part of—just seeing the students come together to understand that Black lives do matter just as much as everyone else's and the white students like actually coming to march with everyone else in that. The event was something that was really empowering to see especially here at a PWI (predominantly white institution).

### **What do you want the UD community to know about being a Black student on campus?**

**Maleah Wells:** The next question is: What do you want the UD community to know about being a Black student on campus?

**Nyah Johnson:** Just for them to know that we are human just like them, and our voices matter. I've been hearing that a lot of white students are intimidated, and that's why they don't really feel comfortable with walking up and talking to us because they just don't know what to expect from us. We're human, and we're not going to go off unless we have to, so just being able to be comfortable around us, because there's more Black people outside of UD. So, you're going to run into a Black person, so be able to be comfortable now to be prepared for what the outside world has to offer.

**Kaitlin Hall:** I agree with Nyah. Just come talk to us, I feel like a lot of students are intimidated or try too hard to relate to us. I mean, we're just as human, if you just talk to me about like the latest WandaVision episode, I'm going to respond. You don't have to talk about, like, Beyonce. You don't have to talk about basketball or rap music—especially that rap music, because I don't even listen to rap music. Come up to me talking about K-pop—I will know everything about K-pop.

Like I'm just as human as you are. Students will also try to talk to us in slang or AAVE—don't do that. Well, you can, but I would just recommend not to do that. Just be yourself. I'm also like, when we go to MEC, it's not just Black students. At MEC there's Middle Eastern students; there's Asian students; there's Latinx students. If you're always wondering where we're hiding, that's really where we're hiding. We're all there. Just stop by. I know I get a lot of white students, they don't like to be in that or that are intimidated because they're like, "Oh there's so many Black people," and I'm like, "That's how I feel when I go to class. I'm like, 'Oh my God, there's too many white people in my lab, and I'm the only Black person, and it's so intimidating.'" So I feel like it's a fair trade-off. So if you feel intimidated, just know that I feel the same way coming to class, and it just makes it so much easier if you guys just say hi and be nice to us, or you just talk to us because at the end of the day, we're all human, and we're all just trying to get through, get our degree and get out of here.

**Christopher Jones:** Yeah, I was going to say what Kaitlyn just said—we're all here to get our degree, just like the next person. Just treat us like we're human. That's kind of another thing on our backs now—that we are being treated differently, and getting this degree is already hard enough. One less thing on our plate would be lovely, just by having simple conversation and not basing everyone off the stereotypes that they could have grown up with. Just respect us like you will respect your own friends. We're just people here, trying to get our degree so we can move on with our lives for the future.

**Joshua Chambers:** Yeah, I would echo everything that's already been already been said. The only thing I would add, though, is that we're not the expert on everything Black culture. So when you ask us, "Hey, Josh, you know what would be the Black perspective on this?" I can tell you what Josh thinks, you know? But I can't tell you what Chris thinks, what Nyah thinks, what Kaitlyn thinks. We're all different people. Understand that my opinion is my opinion. I don't speak for everyone that comes from Chicago either.

## What needs to change on campus?

**Maleah Wells:** The next question is: What type of things do you think need to change on campus? This can pertain to administration, the way they do curriculum, student organizations, anything.

**Kaitlin Hall:** Whoever's on administration on this call, I would just say: Give MEC more money, more money, more money. They can give MEC more money. That's all I have to say. That's the best thing you can do for this campus is just giving MEC more money.

**Nyah Johnson:** Acknowledging that there's an issue on campus or in a classroom could eventually lead to change. I feel like once it's brought up, it at least has been heard. I don't know if it would be considered, but if it's been brought up at least once, then just the fact that if you bring it up multiple times, it's still going to be in the back of the brain: I've heard this before, and I'll write it down; maybe next time, and then we'll get around to it when we can because there's a lot going on, especially right now on the campus. Just acknowledging the fact that there is an issue could eventually lead to change.

**Christopher Jones:** And to piggyback off what Nyah just said: Whenever anything happens, students of color should not have to be calling out their own university to do something. The University needs to take it upon themselves to be like, "OK, so clearly something is happening, and we need to do something." Sometimes it just feels like things aren't done unless students are calling UD out on Instagram or tagging them on a post so that they know that there's an issue. So, take it upon yourself. I get the restriction to things in that everyone is busy. Just to acknowledge it with like a post—we see where you are, we see what's going on, we'll be posting something soon. Yes, things happen and things require time, but again, just trying to get something out as soon as possible and not needing to be called out from your own students is a major thing.

**Joshua Chambers:** First, I emphasize what Kaitlyn said, you know—send MEC more money definitely because the work that they're doing is a tremendous amount, honestly. I've had the privilege of being able to see all that they do, and it's not just MEC. Like the Counseling Center: I think they have four or five counselors—correct me if I'm wrong—for the entire campus, so that's less than a counselor per thousand students,

and I feel like that's a lot for them. Maybe the same alumni that went to comment and have so much to say about everything that we do—ask them to send some money that way. So that's my suggestion on that. In terms of what we could do to make it better, I would just say creating more space for the spaces that are doing the work.

### **How do you see the next five years for students of color on campus?**

**Maleah Wells:** Our final question: How do you see the next five years for students of color on campus?

**Kaitlin Hall:** I notice that every year, the underclassmen are getting more and more diverse. So speaking from experience, as a school that wants to have more diversity, they need to invest to keep that diversity. It's one thing to say you want diversity; it's another thing to support and let it grow because for student a color, we are having different experiences, and we all have different needs. If the school can't accommodate for all our needs, campus is going to become less and less diverse. I hope that when I do come back, I will see more people that look like me and more faculty that look like me, and I think UD is on the right track on supporting students.

**Nyah Johnson:** Yeah I definitely agree with everything Kaitlyn said. So hopefully COVID is gone in five years so that they can actually go out into these communities that have a lot of diversity and get them to come to UD. I'm only a sophomore, and it seems like the class under me has a lot more diversity than the class I'm in. I think it's just going to expand more and more every year, which is a good thing.

**Christopher Jones:** I agree with what both of them said, and yeah, I definitely want to see more diversity within these next five years, but also more connection between the multicultural students. We need help with growing that connection between multicultural students and white students, knowing that they're here because they're friends and not here for a PATH point or something for a class. So definitely seeing connections will be much better—seeing more faculty of color.

**Maleah Wells:** Just to be a little bit more specific, where do you think diversity needs to be more implemented, whether is it curriculum, administration, faculty, staff. Where do you see that it needs more work?

**Nyah Johnson:** faculty and staff for sure is one of them, and also in the curriculum. I feel like we've been learning the same thing, like elementary school, so maybe diversity within the curriculum, like in the CAP classes because we're required to take them.

**Joshua Chambers:** I would definitely say the curriculum, even with what is required in our CAP classes. It wasn't until last spring when I went to Dr. Amin's course, History 337, History of Africa, 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present, that I learned more of my own culture. And of course, Dr. Lawrence-Sanders's course. These courses should be implemented into the CAP structure whereby it isn't just an elective, where Black culture might actually be a requirement—just as much as a requirement to learn about European culture.

# Alumni Voices

*Merida Allen and Lawrence Burnley (facilitators);  
Daria Graham (moderator); Angela Heath, Darius Beckham,  
Lisa Rich-Milan, Marcus Smith (panelists)*

## Introductions

**Lawrence Burnley:** It's really a blessing to be in this space with you. I am Dr. Lawrence Burnley, vice president for diversity and inclusion at the University of Dayton, and I am blessed to co-chair this Alumni Voices session of the 2021 Symposium on Race with my esteemed colleague, Merida Allen, associate dean of students and executive director of Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Julius Amin, who is the chair of the 2121 Symposium on Race planning committee. He is a professor of history here at the University of Dayton and it is a blessing to have you here today.

The goal of the Symposium on Race 2021 is to study the history of race relations at the University; to understand a sense of trends and attitudes; and to outline potential steps towards building a more inclusive campus community. The symposium is designed to educate and inform and bring to the forefront conversations on race. Speakers include faculty, staff, students, and alumni which are the focus of our time this afternoon. Attendees come from all over campus and from the larger community. We hope this panel will be thought provoking and encourage you to be involved in the struggle against racism on college campuses here at the University and beyond in the larger community. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you our distinguished panel.

First, I will introduce our moderator, Dr. Daria Graham. She's a frequent Flyer—class of '92, '01, and '18. Dr. Graham is the immediate

past associate dean of students and executive director of the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center. She currently serves as the associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students at California State University, San Bernardino. Welcome back, Dr. Graham.

We're blessed to have with us, Ms. Angela Heath. Angela is also a frequent Flyer, Class of '78 and Class of 1980. Ms. Heath is a nationally recognized, award-winning businesswoman, author, and lecturer.

Darius Beckham is a native of Dayton and is a member of the class of 2019. I'm honored to be one of his mentors and it's good to have him back. Darius continues to share his gifts here in the Dayton region. He recently worked in Mayor Nan Whaley's office as a legislative aide but is also currently working with the city of Dayton Department of Planning and Community Development. Welcome back, Darius Beckham.

We also welcome back to campus Ms. Lisa Rich-Milan, who is a 1985 business administration graduate. She has a distinguished career as an executive in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.

And finally, we welcome back Dr. Marcus Smith, also a frequent Flyer, Class of '08 and '10. He received his degrees in engineering here at the University of Dayton and is serving as a chief diversity officer with 10 years' experience working with scientists and engineers to both the government and tech world.

Thank you so much for bringing your lens and voice to this experience. With that, I'm going to hand it off to our moderator, Dr. Daria Graham. Thank you.

## Discussion

**Daria Graham:** Thank you, Dr. Burnley. Thank you, Merida, and thank you all. I'm excited to be here and to be able to connect with my fellow alumni. Thank you, Dr. Amin, for the contributions that you continue to give to the campus and setting up these spaces to hear from voices that are maybe on the margin but shifting the center to make sure that we are recognizing that these voices are essential to the current experience of the University of Dayton students but also to the structure of the University.



## Panelists' experience as students

**Daria Graham:** The first question that has been given to the panelists is the request to talk about your experience as an African American



*Daria Graham*

student at the University of Dayton. What were some of the enduring and impactful memories of your experience at UD? And if you wouldn't mind sharing some examples because we know there's power in the story; this shifting the center and the dominant narrative is in the power of the story, and the story aligns with many of our different cultures.

**Darius Beckham:** Good afternoon, everybody. Just a slight correction in Dr. Burnley's welcome. I was with the mayor's office for the last 18 months, but I'm now with the Hall Hunger Initiative as project manager. UD was only two years ago for me. I can point to several experiences that were really pivotal for me, especially as a young Black man on campus. Upon coming to the University of Dayton, it was a bit of a culture shock. My high school was fairly diverse. When I got to the University of Dayton, I remember the Black student population being around 3%. It was really amazing to see the campus become more diverse, to see Black student population grow through my four years. But at the beginning, it was an adjustment for me. I think in terms of what experiences truly made a huge difference and just made me extremely proud to be a Flyer is that while the Black student population at that time was smaller than it is today, we were mighty. You know, just the freedom and liberty that we had to program and organize and work with the administrators, particularly the Office of Multicultural Affairs, as it was called at the time. I had the pleasure of being Black Student Union president for a few years. We were really able to make some amazing inroads just for the Black student population. And you know the Office of the President worked with us at every point. Dr. Burnley can attest to this; so can Dr. Graham and Dr. Morgan a bit. You know, we ended up actually building a relationship with the

ASALH Conference, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, where the Black Student Union was attending that conference annually after a certain point. Those things made a huge difference in how we experience the campus. There was opportunity after opportunity to really dig in to being an African American on campus and find ways and be collaborators with the administration in terms of finding ways that we can enrich the Black student experience. That's what I was really encouraged by during my time there. I never felt as though it wasn't my university. And I'll especially say about the Office of Multicultural Affairs [now known as MEC]: There was no other place on campus, in my opinion, that really made you feel so at home—just the camaraderie, the relationships, the richness of culture, and freedom to be Black students without filter or hesitation. The Office of Multicultural Affairs really created that and allowed us to go back out into campus and re-create those spaces.

**Daria Graham:** I appreciate you, Darius. What we know is even though it was just two years ago, time changes swiftly when you're talking about higher education. And even though I've only been gone for seven months, I know that there are things that have changed at the University of Dayton. So although you say it's only been two years, we recognize how much change has happened during your tenure, but probably post as well.

The next I'd ask is actually the same question so actually we'll do a bookend: Angela Heath, class of '78.

**Angela Heath:** Happy to be here. I haven't been to the campus in probably seven years or so, so this is kind of fun. I always felt like UD was my home, and I'm not sure that it had anything to do with the University itself or the administration. We were a very small group of people back then. And BATU, Black Action Through Unity, was the core—absolutely that was the core for us. That's where we went for encouragement; that's where we went when our money was running low; that's where we went for peer mentoring; that's where we went. And I can remember very clearly being a freshman, and one of the very first things that happened when I came on campus is I ran into an African American woman, and she said, "Are you going to go to BATU tonight?" I had no idea what it was, and she said, "Oh you've got to be there." So I go, and it was just like a welcome reception, get to know

each other. And we were able to sign up for upperclass mentors at that time, and that made all the difference because those mentors sort of took us under their wings and told us what to expect. And I have to say, back then, the University was very separate. Back then, it was primarily Black and white; there weren't a lot of different nationalities there. But you would rarely see Black and white studying together—Black and white doing fun activities together. It was a very separate university, and I don't believe that there was anything from the administration that made it that way. I think we just sort of gravitated where we felt comfortable. And so it was that union of the other African Americans and the African American adults who were on campus that made the place feel whole. So that's like a really important thing. We have to make sure we always have some kind of welcoming into the University as a whole, but also into that experience.

A couple of the things that I remember that kind of struck me as odd. I came from a high school where I was one of five African Americans to graduate. So when I got to the University of Dayton, I had never been around so many intelligent African American people. But I found that when it was time for study groups in most of my classes, I was the only one or one of maybe two or three. So we didn't have within my major—I was in sociology and urban planning—a group of African Americans that I could pal around with and get notes from and study with. And I was not getting an invitation from my counterparts. So that piece of it felt very lonely. And because there were not so many African Americans represented on the administration side, it felt like being able to get real counseling within your major wasn't as accessible. And I spoke to a couple of alumni during that time to kind of wager, "Was my experience unique, or was that the experience that we all shared?" And it did appear that way—that we didn't have the resources for study. And I remember one time I went to my counselor—I was a junior, and I wanted to make sure I was going to graduate on time because one more semester was not an option, and you know, I thought it was a fine discourse. But then I learned from a white counterpart who had that same counselor that she was actually getting information that I was not getting. So my experience with UD was made rich by the community that I was in. The separatism actually didn't matter because I didn't know what I was losing out on. You don't know what you don't know. So I didn't know about the

richness that was happening all around me that I didn't get a chance to participate in. But I don't think any of us felt alone because that Black Action Through Unity system was so strong that we all felt supported. But the truth of the matter was: We didn't know it, but we were not getting the full experience.

**Daria Graham:** I appreciate that. One of the things I'm most proud of as a former BATU member myself is: If you look at the history, Black Action Through Unity was actually created before the office. BATU and other Black students appealed to the University, and the Center for Afro-American Affairs was created in 1970.<sup>1</sup> The African and Afro-American Studies Program,<sup>2</sup> which started in 1970, also offered courses. So it's interesting and so appropriate that now 51 years later, you have the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Office that is partnering with Dr. Morgan on this call, and we're going back to incorporating education in the center. But yes, it was Black students coming together. And it's interesting that even Darius mentioned it: It was Black students coming together, supporting each other. That's my story too—Veronica Moore's pulling me into BATU. That's where you got the resources, and through student activism, we have this formal area that continues to grow today, so thank you for making those connections for us through your memories.

I want to offer the same space for Lisa Rich-Milan, Class of 1985.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Roderick McDavis Appointed Coordinator of the African and Afro-American Studies Program" (1970). News Releases. 3736.  
[https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news\\_rls/3736](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/3736)

<sup>2</sup> The African and Afro-American Studies Program began in January 1970. Excerpt from the 1971-72 Undergraduate Bulletin: "The Program of African and Afro-American Studies (AAS) offers courses as well as an undergraduate minor in Black Studies. The program is administered by the Assistant Provost. ... The purpose of the African and Afro-American Studies Program at the University of Dayton is to provide all students with a more accurate and relevant picture of themselves and their progenitors and to develop operational methods for abating the social and human problems on the contemporary American scene. The African and Afro-American Studies Program proposes to give Blacks the intellectual tools necessary to effect change in a technocracy without severing them from their distinctive Black consciousness. African and Afro-American Studies, using the Black experience as its base, provides for the development and transmission of ideas and information vital to the Black community in its efforts to gain self-determination and self-definition." Available at  
<https://ecommons.udayton.edu/bulletin/58/>

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Daria, thank you very much, and Angela you did a nice job pulling all of that, together because my walk is very similar to your walk as well. My background is as a CEO and chief executive officer for pharma and biotech. I have 25-plus years of that. Let me talk about how the University of Dayton not only created the leader that you see today, but also was very instrumental in me and who I am today. I'm glad to see that in the back of Daria's screenshot is BATU because Black Action Through Unity was crucial when I came on board. I actually grew up going to Catholic schools. My school from elementary all the way to high school was Catholic, and it was predominantly non-diverse. I was one of very few African Americans that attended that school but had a great education behind me. I was strong in math and science. When I came to the University, I chose not to go with engineering. I chose to go through the business side. I thought I wanted to be an accountant. Believe it or not, I did two years of that after I graduated. But when I first stepped foot on University of Dayton, I was very comfortable in the University because I had been there several times with my parents. We walked the campus; we walked the buildings; we walked everything about the campus. What I was not comfortable with was the faculty and who would be my teachers. What is the process of when you are having challenges as a student and you need to go through tutoring or you need help, what do you need to do? The very first day that I came on campus, I was greeted by an African American student. She just happened to see me unloading my car with my family and, and she was laughing. She'll still tell the story today because she's actually my best friend. She'd say, "All I could see was pink coming out of that car. I knew whatever room you were going to, it's going to be all pink." So, she came up and introduced herself to me, and then from that point we both said, "Hey, do you know that there's a meeting at the BATU lounge?" Now, we didn't know what the BATU lounge was. We knew that it dealt with the Black students that were coming on campus. But the fact that it was there for a student that was new to a university to be able to connect with other fellow student bodies of the same background and to get to know teachers, that was critical to my success. So the first day after getting everything put in the room, it wasn't even unpacked, there was a meeting where we had to go to the BATU lounge, and at the BATU lounge, we

met faculty; we met upperclassmen. And the upperclassmen really wrapped their arms around us—it was really a very tight knit community.

So they began to bond with us, and I mean I couldn't even walk out of the student union without someone greeting me saying, "Hey, do you know where you're going? Do you have any questions? How can I help you?" So that was the bond that was formed on day one because there was a foundation, and as long as there is a foundation or commonality that you are introduced to at the University from day one and it continues and is consistent throughout the years that you're at the University, then you really can make it through any challenges that you have. So when it came to "OK, what are the classes that are really good in business administration that I could take? What will focus me in the area of accounting and finance?" at that time, Dr. [Thomas] Wright was the head professor of economics. He was unbelievable as a faculty member and a mentor to African American students. His daughter, Vicki Wright, was a student at the University of Dayton. She lived off campus, but she oftentimes was on campus as well. So those connections are critical. There came a point my junior year where I needed to make some decisions around a preceptorship. Now the University of Dayton at that time did not talk about preceptorships. I know from my perspective, as a business major or an accounting major, I had to go seek that on my own, and it was because of the questions that I would ask my peer group and the upperclassmen that were in that same major that helped me to know where to go to the career development center to begin looking at potential preceptorships. "Do I want a preceptorship that's based in Dayton Ohio? Or, do I want one that's outside of the state?" At that time, I do wish that the University of Dayton had been a little bit stronger with this. I did do an accounting and finance preceptorship my junior year, but that could have been much stronger as I went through my journey. That close-knit relationship of the foundation of the BATU and the upperclassmen and the faculty that came through made us want to stay. The classes and the curriculum that I went through was outstanding. That is one thing that the University does do. University of Dayton trains you well for what you need.

**Daria Graham:** Thank you for that. I'm hoping that attendees will notice this thread of relationships, which is one of the things that I thought about with my experience—that community, which we talk

about a lot at UD, actually manifested in the relationships with faculty, relationships with the dining service ladies that told me, “I’ve seen you too many times today, and I’m telling your daddy you’re not going to class.” It was those relationships that manifested that got me to graduation. I appreciate that, and I hear that similarly through these, through our stories, our narratives. Dr. Smith, I invite you now as a fellow frequent Flyer to share your story as well.

**Marcus Smith:** I’m going to echo a lot of what the other panel members already said. It’s been about 13 years since I finished undergrad now. I was in the School of Engineering majoring in electrical and computer engineering. Coming from my primary education, I was in more diverse schools within the city of Dayton, and when I came to the University of Dayton, it was a huge culture shock being a part of this predominantly white environment—and even more so within my major. When you walked into Kettering Labs back in ’08, there were very few people of color in my major. Additionally, when you sit down in your classes, there was little to no minority representation within my faculty. Up to that point in time, I had thoroughly enjoyed school, and I saw myself as a fairly above average performer academically, so it always lingered in the back of my mind whether or not I would pursue professorship and academia, but seeing that there was a lack of representation there made me question whether this was something that was truly attainable. After that, being that I was in the School of Engineering, the curriculum was fairly challenging, and my first year, it was a very steep learning curve—so much so that I fell behind quite a bit. It was at that time that I really wished there were others within my program like myself that I could have kind of leaned on or just had a mentor to lean on to help me navigate the transition into college. It took me a little while to climb over the learning curve to hit a plateau or just stable ground to finish my way through college. In spite of all this, though, one of the things that I will echo again, similar to the other panelists, was that in spite of the lack of minority representation, I really did find a sense of community within organizations, such as BATU, Black Action Through Unity, as well as the NSBE organization, National Society of Black Engineers. Even my senior year I recall, we had a NSBE house, similar to the BATU house on campus within the student community, and we were one of the first universities across the country

to have a NSBE house, so we got featured in the NSBE magazine at that time. A lot of my lot lifelong friends come from these organizations. I still talk to many of them, to this day, even every day.

**Daria Graham:** Thank you. I think you'd be proud to know that there is still a NSBE house. That was a pivotal moment for the history of the University, and students continue to benefit from what your year brought to the to the University, so thank you for that for that legacy.

I want to shift this now, keeping in mind that real social justice work means that we need to challenge institutions. I saw a quote that said, "You can't have systemic change without systemic answers." We can't put it on individuals. It takes more than individuals for systemic change. It takes change at the highest level. So I'd like for you all, in what you've learned recently about new initiatives at the University, what recommendations do you give to the University?

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** One of the things that I neglected to say, is what was very strong back when we attended University of Dayton, were the Divine Nine—the African American sororities and fraternities that existed on campus. So I'm going to give you two scenarios, as I address your second question. I graduated from University of Dayton and got disconnected from UD as an alumna. There wasn't a lot of outreach, and when we did have reunions that came back, they were not as inclusive, or we had the president of the University in front of us asking for money when there wasn't any ownership or inclusion of the diversity and the different groups that came out of the University of Dayton. And it was a missed opportunity because they had sitting in the room people that could have contributed. And then I will speak from an employer perspective. I had the opportunity to come back and be the CEO of CompuNet Clinical Labs based out of Moraine, Ohio, and in Dayton, Ohio. And I actually tried to reconnect with the University of Dayton as an employer, No. 1, to build out programs for preceptorships, but we also needed talent in our lab that we had difficulty finding in the marketplace. We were even going to support some sort of curriculum that could build the skill sets that we needed for someone graduating in our medical field. And there was difficulty in getting that done. And so that sort of made me step back, to disconnect from the University of Dayton even more, not only from that alumni perspective, but then also from the employer perspective. What has gotten me back, which is what I really like and



what I'm seeing that is definitely needed for this University, is that you have to understand the different cultures—not just African American, but any culture that is coming into the University and Dayton. There are variations and differences in every culture that enters into the front door of your University. And each one of those, whether it's Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, female, male, whatever, there is a different belief system and a different way in which they operate, and there's a different way in which they learn. So you have to understand, as a University, it's one thing to recruit a student; it's another to retain them and see them to graduation. So the programs you put in place to support the different cultures that you are bringing into the University of Dayton is what an employer, like myself, would be interested in looking at, because our world is diverse. In pharmaceuticals and biotech, we have leadership that is diverse that represents all cultures because our world is culturally different. So we expect the University to be in that format as well. What I've seen change over the last year or two, is that I was invited to several of UD's Commitment to Inclusive Excellence and had a chance to view your strategic planning around this. To me, words are one thing, but to see a full-blown strategic plan that has been built out and strategically being implemented and shows programs and dates and times and metrics of the results that we're seeing within your university to truly help these students learn and be successful in your environment is what an employer looks for. What has impressed me and has brought me back as an alumna and as a student of color, but also as an employer, is the strategic business plan that you now have in place and the movement and the structures that you're putting in place, showing me that you actually care. You're putting your putting action behind your words, whereas I didn't see the action behind the words before.

**Daria Graham:** I appreciate you mentioning that. I know that one of the examples that the University has put into place is a new position in the school of business. Dr. Castel Sweet is the director of community engagement and diversity, equity and inclusion. She sits on the staff of the school of Business Administration, and I know that there's also a center for diversity and inclusion in the School of Engineering. Are there other places in the University that could benefit from having a real focus on diversity and inclusion that is connected to the Office of Diversity Inclusion with Dr. Burnley and also connected with the Multi-Ethnic

Education and Engagement Center with Merida, so that it is institutionalized? This reminds us of the example where it's already happening in some places, such as the Multi-Ethnic Business Leaders program and the Multi-Ethnic Engineers program. So doing more things like that to institutionalize the commitment to diversity.

Darius, any recommendations to the University?

**Darius Beckham:** Sure, much like Ms. Lisa Rich-Milan, I think it would be wise and beneficial for the University to continue going down that path of not just leveraging our Black and brown and minority alumni for where we are now but creating that two-way opportunity for alumni to come back and get involved, as well as African American students and others to see what the University of Dayton has created in terms of the opportunities that we took advantage of after graduation, but also to extend those same opportunities to students who are there now. I was a political science and sociology major when I was an undergrad, and while I'm one of those strange people that enjoy learning about politics and government, there were not African Americans teaching those classes. And while I still did perfectly fine, it would have been really amazing for someone like me, as one of the few Black students in those classes, to hear perspectives on those things whether it was forms of government, whether it was current politics, whether it was legislation, coming from somebody who looks like me. I had an opportunity to look over the University's Anti-Racist Action Plan and I'm extremely proud of it. I think everything in the plan is pivotal for what UD can be and will be moving forward. But I'd like to tell, just a quick story on how connecting with alumni from an institutional, systematic way was beneficial for me, but it was something that I had to do on my own. And if we can incorporate those types of communications, they will go a long way in benefiting students. I actually went on the Dayton to DC trip my junior year—it's something that's offered in the political science department. I had no interest in working on Capitol Hill; I had no interest in moving to DC and working on the federal level. My passion and my interest was at the local level—coming back home to the city of Dayton and really trying to be someone that is about progress and change here in the city. I wanted to take advantage of that opportunity to go on that trip, but when I was there, we were not introduced to African American alumni in DC. And it's interesting because I remember being at the

African American alumni reunion on campus and a gentleman by the name of Rashad Young was there. And I had read his bio; I had heard some things about him here and there, but Daria, I believe it was yourself, somebody mentioned to me that he was now the city manager of the District of Columbia under Mayor Bowser. And I thought, how in the world am I just now hearing about this guy my junior year. That blew my mind. And when I was in DC for the trip, he wasn't on that. It could have been due to a schedule, but quite honestly, I'm not sure it was because the alumni that we were meeting were all at the federal level, and Rashad is a city manager. So when I was in DC, I went out of my way to call him, to message him on every social media platform I could find. He bought me breakfast, and he sat down and gave me great advice, and he is honestly part of my story and will always be, in addition to everyone that invested in me at the University of Dayton. The advice Rashad gave me when I was there was advice that I took, and it helped me make a decision that really helped to put me where I am now. So things like that are really key. And then the last two things I'll say—just increasing diversity. Of course, we had the Office of Multicultural Affairs; we had BATU; but we also want to go to class and be taught, here and there, by people that look like us. And then two, of course, increasing Black students on campus and just overall diversity. I can attest that when I was there, I think the Black student population rose a couple percentage points. While that seems small, it was huge for us. It was really amazing to just see so many more Black students in the incoming classes.

**Daria Graham:** So increasing diversity of faculty, increasing the number of Black students, but also intentional strategies to connect Black students with alumni, particularly in their areas of interest. I know that I saw Anita in the room here, who is in alumni services, and I know that they're working on building upon an alumni mentoring program. And I'm looking at Carlos in my window too, and he's nodding his head—Anita Brothers and Carlos Stewart and Amanda Rupp. I know that has already been in conversation, and I hear that it is not just a desire but essential—and the central recommendation from Black alumni.

**Angela Heath:** Yes, I wanted to piggyback on what Darius was mentioning and also what you guys are working on right now. We've got a great gift that we're using right now: We've got technology to connect

us. Why not use this platform to bring students and specific majors together with alumni, and why not use this platform to give students a realistic understanding of where we can do with our majors. One of my concerns is always to make sure that students are prepared for what the future holds. I've seen too many young people come out of school, wondering, "What in the heck am I going to do?" because jobs are not as plentiful. So I looked at the University career center and the entrepreneurship center, and the first thing I noticed is that there were very few people of color in photographs. I mean that's a very minimal thing, and I know the University does a good job of showing diversity on the front page. But as you go deeper into the website, you've got to show diversity throughout. Now in order to show that, of course, you have to have that. But this is another important thing that sometimes I think we overlook. Affinity groups are great, but what we're really after, not just at the University, but the country as a whole, is a cultural shift. So here's my story: When I was a senior at UD, I took a class in gerontology. I didn't know what it was, but it sounded like it would be easy, so I took the class, and I met a white professor, Professor Baldwin, and I became his work-study assistant. He decided that I was brilliant enough for him to spend his time to pour into. And I almost forgot this, but he poured into me, and he said, "Hey, Miami University has some full scholarships in this field." I was like, "This is the study of aging. I'm not interested in aging. I'm going to build houses in Atlanta." And he talked to me long enough, and he mentored me enough that I said, "OK, well, I'll apply," and I got a full scholarship in an area that was—OK, it was like, "What am I going to do with this?" but it was free education, and I don't turn to free education. So that is exactly what we want in society. We don't want just affinity groups. It is great to have BATU—but what we want is for the University as a whole, for the society as a whole, to be sensitive, so that there are more white professors who reach out to more than just people who perhaps look like them and say, "Hey, here's the opportunity; take a look at it. Let me talk to you after class," and, "You know, there's something about you that seems to be special," or, "I see you're struggling." One of the other things I would encourage the University to use this platform for has to do with entrepreneurship. I would love to be able to see some of the alumni who have started businesses be able to mentor into some of the students. My 10 cents'

worth of crystal ball gazing suggests that as we go into the future, this whole concept of micro business is where we're going. Corporations after COVID-19 are looking at their bottom line, and they're saying, "Hey, let me hire some contractors."

**Daria Graham:** Thank you for that. One of the things that really comes to mind, as you all are sharing is we also have to figure out how to let alumni know what the University is doing. I know that each of us as panelists got the strategic plan and an update on the anti-racist statement. But there are so many opportunities. I'll give you an example. When I moved to California, I went and signed up as an alumna—I hadn't realized I hadn't really done that—and I got a link to participate in the mentoring program. I thought, "If I don't do this, then I'm not being what I would have asked others to be. So we met two weeks ago, and we went from talking about careers to my edges and hair. It was a beautiful conversation. It was only supposed to be a half-hour. My daughter joined us, and it was an hour and 15 minutes. But that mentoring program was there for a while, and I didn't participate. So how do we beef up and really strengthen getting out the fact that there's a navigation program? That the new director position in MEC is going to have a direct connection to alumni services and advancement? How do we make sure the folks know that there is a direct scholarship—that there's going to be three by the end of the academic year—that solely focus on giving resources to our students of color, particularly our Black students? How do we make sure folks are joining the Flyer Connection program? How do you even know that it's happening? The Black Alumni Town Hall—are we making sure that that all of us are signed up and participating in the fall? We have so many opportunities that we need to make sure are getting out there, so that we have space to really focus on new initiatives that our alumni are speaking to right now. It's really essential in creating pathways. I hear Angela saying there's got to be pathways in the academic curriculum, and Darius saying I not only want to see my reflection during class, but connect with alumni to get to resources. It goes to what Lisa was saying, as well—how are we making them institutionalized and formal and not just by word of mouth, not because Daria told Darius, but because they're actually situated and then marketed and publicized. Dr. Smith, do you want to add to that?

**Marcus Smith:** I will echo a lot of the sentiment shared by the other panel members. First of all, I commend the University for the steps that they have taken and this action plan that they have put together. Some of the things that I picked out within there—implementing an aggressive strategy to increase diversity and equity among faculty, staff and administrators—was one of the things that I mentioned within my experience in terms of my first year. Seeing that lack of representation really had an impact on me. So that would be beneficial. I know that a number of universities have workshops or just postdoctoral fellowships in which they are building a bridge to becoming a faculty member, so I would highly encourage the University to consider a similar program. Additionally, in the action plan you all mentioned, strengthening the relationship between the University and your Black alumni or alumni of color and maybe creating or, if it exists, building up a program where our Black alumni can mentor current students. If it exists, I just hadn't seen it, and maybe the marketing just needs to be better. I saw that you have a program called PEERS—the program to engage and exchange resources for students—which is amazing, but if you had a layered mentoring program so that you could bring graduate students as well as alumni into that, I think it would be extremely beneficial. And then the last thing that I jotted down was to work with the Dayton African American community. Being a local native to Dayton, one of the programs that was amazing when I was a kid here in Dayton, Ohio was the NYSP, National Youth Sports Program. And I don't know where it went—it was a federally funded program—

**Daria Graham:** I was an administrator for NYSP!

**Marcus Smith:** Yes! It was nationally funded, but I think in the early 2000s, the funding got cut for that program. I feel like that program was a huge bridge to the African American community, and that is something that the University should really consider bringing back. I thought it was extremely beneficial.

**Daria Graham:** Thank you for bringing up NYSP because not until this moment, did I think about how NYSP countered some of our concerns. It's a great example of the opposite of Christmas on Campus. Many of us have had concerns about the “adoption” language that has since been sundowned—this visual of students of color, Black kids particularly, coming on campus and the University in its predominantly

white state doing for kids and then sending them home. But NYSP, many Black kids were coming, learning about the University, participating in the sports camp, and really having an enriched experience, where it wasn't the University bestowing upon them, but rather giving them a place. I never thought about NYSP as the opposite of that kind of visual of Christmas on Campus—what a great suggestion.

So before we open the time up for questions from our attendees, I just want to kind of put together what I'm hearing, as far as recommendations to the University. One being, if it already exists, then there needs to be a way to communicate it. Oftentimes we get into this place where, when we get suggestions, we immediately want to say, "Well, this is what we're doing." Well, if you're doing it, and people don't know about it, and it's not just one or two people but it's a population, there is a breakdown in communication. There are a lot of initiatives that it sounds like many don't know about. But then there's also this piece where we have to move our ideas to action. The idea around pathways, pipelines for our students, particularly with our alumni—it's not enough to just be in the idea phase. It is time we have to come from idea to action and to do it right. So we appreciate those suggestions.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Daria, if I can add one more thing to that: What I didn't hear is that there's three reasons why students go to college. No. 1 is to get a good education. No. 2, you build relationships during that experience. No. 3 is to be at the ready to go to market to get a job. I mean that's the reason why our students go to college. So the one piece that I haven't heard that I don't want to get lost is to make sure that we are teaching—however that is, through alumni, through the faculty, through other students—how do I network? What are the tools that I use? What are the career paths that this degree is going to give me, and then what is it and where is it that I need to go in order to get those experiences? And how do I get connected? Because oftentimes I talk to students who are either referred to me or they come from colleges, and they're familiar with the background, so they want to talk to me. But when you ask them, "What is it that you want to do? Tell me what your background is. Let me see if you have your resume together, and tell me what it is you want to do," oftentimes they'll say, "Well I'm not sure. I thought I wanted to do this; now I'm thinking about that." We have to be very purposeful in

helping our students know what it is they want to do and where they want to do or what their options are. Who would have ever thought that someone going into budget accounting would have ended up going into sales, who would have then ended up becoming a CEO of multiple companies. That pathway was never in my line of sight when I was at UD, but the foundation of the finance piece made that so. So go back to the fundamentals of why your students are here in the first place. It is to get a good education, to build relationships, and to get a good job when they graduate. How are we preparing students to know the direction ahead?

**Daria Graham:** OK, I want to ask an additional one. What do you wish had been part of your curriculum? I heard you say, Lisa, you were really prepared well as a University of Dayton student, but I'm asking the panelists—is there something that you wish had been added to your coursework?

**Marcus Smith:** When I was starting off as a freshman, the program that I was in, electrical and computer engineering, was a very course intense program. I think in order to graduate in four years, you were required to take 18 credit hours a semester until you were done. So that was quite the course load. It was a very large load, so I guess I'm not saying that something needs to be added; something needed to be taken away. Because again, I ended up staying a fifth year, because within my first two years, I dropped a course or two, and that immediately set me behind a semester. So if we could build more modular programs with less course work in order to have students be done within four years' time here, that would be my only suggestion.

**Daria Graham:** I appreciate that, and a reminder that hits different students in different ways, particularly if the scholarships complete at eight semesters.

**Marcus Smith:** Yeah and that was the other thing—my scholarship did finish at eight semesters. So I had to take out a full tuition loan in order to finish my fifth year of college.

**Darius Beckham:** I was just going to mention that for me personally, it would have been really helpful to just see more applicable coursework to the city of Dayton. I had the benefit of joining Dayton Civic Scholars, which was very hyper focused on volunteer opportunities and civic



involvement off campus. But I took a state and local government class where we didn't talk about the city itself. As we start to think about how we keep UD's student population in the city of Dayton, in terms of keeping talent in this community, those can play a significant role. Real-life application to the city of Dayton and its budget and the departments that do this and do that—those things should not have to necessarily wait until a master's program before you actually see and connect what you're learning to a decision that the Dayton City Commission just made. Those are things that I think will be really beneficial in the political science department, so that students are actually seeing how those type of decisions actually affect the neighborhoods right off campus and within the city. When I joined the mayor's office, there was a lot that I just didn't know in terms of how the city operates, and those things would have been helpful.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Darius, you bring up a great point. There are two organizations in Dayton—the Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Dayton. I'm a graduate of Leadership Dayton. They focus mainly on organizations and companies and leaders that are coming through that way. However, what an idea if the universities could connect with those two organizations and say, "What can you teach me?" or, "What can you do with students?" If you want to learn about Dayton and you want to keep your talent here, in some cases, getting connected to those two organizations.

**Angela Heath:** I had no clue what I was going to do with my life. I think a lot of students are that way. I had no guidance. I didn't come from a family that could guide me. I was the first one to go to college in my family. My career counselor provided just the basics—this is what you need to do to graduate. What can I do with this associate degree, this bachelor's degree? The entrepreneurial space—what I see a lot is the schools are pushing primarily tech entrepreneurship, which is great. But for real, most entrepreneurs are in small businesses. So in real life, I believe students need to understand how what they're doing at UD can translate into solo partnership, small business, micro-sized business. I'm going to keep pushing that.

**Daria Graham:** We have two questions from two students, one is Matthew Bond, and one is from Amira Fitzpatrick. The one from Matthew Bond is in our chat: As an African American, how does it make

you feel that the University of Dayton advocates and champions community and inclusion at the surface, but from your experiences and even from my own, it seems as though African Americans are often alienated from overall campus and academic life?

**Angela Heath:** I feel good about the fact that we're having this conversation. I think this is a step in the right direction for the University to say, "Let's talk about it. Let's examine some things we can do." But these are hard transitions, not just for UD, but for our society as a whole. So I think the first step is to be open, to hear some recommendations. They won't all fly, but some of them will, and some things will change, and some things are going to change slower than we would all like to see. But I commend the University for even having these conversations, and I feel good when these dialogues are presented in a way where people can be honest and true and try to move things forward.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Looking at Matthew's question in more detail, communication is a two-way street. There's ownership—not only on the University, but there's ownership on the students themselves. If there is something that you are not getting out of your experience at the University of Dayton, you have to identify who it is you can go talk to, first of all to tell them, "Here's my experience so far. What resources do I have?" or, "What can I do to get more engaged or get more connected?" or, "What can the University do to build programs to make sure that I'm not a lost student?" But I think as students you've got to come forward, and as a University, you have got to hear and understand what your students are saying and build those programs to address them. If you're not, this is all in vain.

**Darius Beckham:** I so very much appreciate what Ms. Lisa Rich-Milan just said because that was exactly my experience. As a freshman, I looked around, and I said there were things that I wanted to see, and we immediately started having those conversations—whether it was Office of Multicultural Affairs staff or Dr. Spina himself, who was there for the majority of my four years. And the changes were made. I mean, of course, I'm not going to pat myself on the back or anything, but I was a bit of a unique student in the sense that I was able to lead from the forefront of BATU as president for the two years that I was there to really organizationally advocate for some of these things. And I recognize that not every student is about to have an organization behind

them or an executive board that is also on the same page as them. However, BATU is still there. And those are the organizations that exist that can collectively advocate for what you need. And that's what was being said: If you're experiencing something, then the chances are other students are too, and there are strategic and very conscious ways of having those changes made at an institutional level. One of the major success stories I can attest to: My first meeting on the BATU board, when I had a leadership position, was, "What do you all want to see? What has been your experience on campus? What are some of the issues that you guys think are present?" And that room was packed out. It was standing room only, and one thing we heard over and over and over again was students feeling culturally isolated. Students having to deal with microaggressions. Students feeling alone in certain campus experiences. Just based on folks in that room not understanding them. It took all of them—and it took about two to three years, but we took that information, and we immediately approached Dr. Spina; we worked with our adviser at the time, Dr. Graham. By the time I graduated, the University adopted a cultural module called U Diversity that every single incoming freshman has to take. And we thought, "You know, that was a win," because it was a way that we could institutionalize and systematically change the fact that students were not learning about diverse people. I mean I can't tell you how many students that I went to UD with that told me they went to all white high schools, or they did not have African American friends, or they had not been in organizations or classes or student groups with minorities. Coming to campus, for minorities, is a culture shock. I think for the majority of students, our white counterparts, it oftentimes is more of the same—and that is kind of conflicting in the sense that there was not, up until that time, a mechanism for making sure that the majority of students were sensitive to the minority of students. And I'm hopeful that it was a step in the right direction. It was something that we were really proud of.

**Lawrence Burnley:** If I can just weigh in really quickly, I really want to affirm Matthew's question. Darius, to your comment about student learning about peers, about diversity, equity, and inclusion. That's the question for faculty, staff, and administration as well. We are placing a lot of emphasis on building the workforce capacity, beginning with the senior level, to develop the kinds of intercultural competencies and

equity-minded leadership skills in order to effectively advance the goals and objectives that are embedded in the strategic plan—those that are in the Anti-Racism Action Plan. We realized, for instance, with the Flyer Promise scholarship and other initiatives the past five years to achieve greater racial and ethnic diversity at the undergraduate level, we've gone from probably 8% or 9% enrollment of underrepresented students each fall to about 16.5%. And when the Flyer Promise Scholarship was introduced to me, I was excited that there was investment and strategy being developed to impact the undergraduate population. But my question was, "Where's the correlating strategy and investment to impact faculty, staff, and administration demographics to achieve greater racial ethnic diversity in those spaces, along with addressing gender equity?" We now have those goals and objectives embedded there. We have now a position that's actually being searched for now, a new full-time equivalent for an associate director for workforce diversification. It's not enough to bring people into the space of the University, but how do we leverage that, and how do we develop the kinds of capacity to understand what these issues are? Even in terms of looking at ourselves in terms of identifying policies that are themselves racist, if you will, and that create the barriers and that form experiences that have been shared here. So thank you for that. Lisa Rich-Milan talked about student involvement, and we talked a lot about student agency to really push the envelope and really hold administration accountable. I remember Daria and two other students and myself went to a conference—Darius, do you remember the film about Black student activism in the '60s and '70s? You brought that back to campus. These positions that we hold, the fact that MEC exists, the position that I hold—administrators didn't wake up one day and say, "We ought to do this." This is because of student activism and student demands that said, "You know what? You are not delivering on your promise." Thank you for making that point.

**Daria Graham:** Dr. Burnley, I do want to say this to Matthew and the other students, which I think I'm at a better place to say now that I don't work there. Your question was, "How does it make you feel?" It sucks. It is not OK. There is no excuse for it, particularly when the University is using resources, and we have to believe the University has a good heart—that's what the mission and the values are based on—but when you have experienced something, you don't want to hear that. You want

to hear that the University is taking responsibility and making significant moves to have a response that mirrors the impact. And oftentimes the institution can't do it. Oftentimes what we're feeling at an individual level, an institution can't respond to. But I want you to know as a former student, as an alumna, as a former staff member, there's no excuse for it. But what I think you're hearing people say is that we recognize that it happens, and we are trying our best to use our resources, our networks whatever power or influence we have in our sphere of influence, to make change in the curriculum, to make change for the expectation of all students to go through an educational moment around diversity and inclusion. But I think the University still is struggling and still working toward, "How do we respond in a way that mirrors the impact?" That when students say, "This happened to me," they feel like they've been heard and that there's been a response to it. And I know that the faculty and staff here and, particularly, Dr. Spina—that is their goal. But it is so difficult. When I was going through it, when I was hearing the N-word, when I was being followed on campus, when I had those experiences, when I was mentoring Darius and he was in my office at the point of tears saying, "Something has to give," I want to acknowledge that feeling is not OK. So, I want to make sure we get to Amira.

**Amira Fitzpatrick:** I know, obviously the University has created our action list of anti-racist steps. My question to our alumni here is: If students were to take it into their own hands, maybe through BATU or another organization, what would you suggest we put on a list of demands for the school? Because there's a lot of schools, we've been talking about this throughout my time researching, there's a lot of schools that have a list of demands that were created by students. So if students were to do that through an organization, what would you suggest we include on that list?

**Darius Beckham:** Being two years removed and former BATU executive board member, I'm just going to walk through how we handled it. We would first start with gauging what students are still experiencing. Every meeting at the top of the year, we'd say, "How has your experience been? How can the University can grow and better support and enrich Black students experience on campus?" I would start there. I don't want to speak for the current student population, so I think working with those different organizations, whether it's BATU or other minority

student groups, gauging from that level what everyone else is experiencing and then kind of coalescing around some key things that you hear more than once. For us at that time, it was that students are tired of bearing the brunt of cultural ignorance, so we came together and tried to do something about that. I'm not sure what students might say if you would ask that question today. I imagine it might be some of the things that we heard when I was there, but then after you take that list, I would compare it to the University's commitment to anti-racism and try to see any gaps. Are there things that are not being considered in some of these next steps? Are there ways that we can build on that? And make sure everything that is for Black students and minority students is being directly communicated to them.

**Daria Graham:** I have another question: As a Latina student coming to the University, I faced tremendous cultural shock. Feeling as I was losing my culture and the knowledge of the Spanish language due to inability to find people to speak with, I was very close to transferring, and many of my friends transferred after freshman year because of this culture shock and alienation. What would you recommend to do to prevent future scenarios like this?

**Angela Heath:** Sometimes when you don't see the solution in front of your face, you have to create it. So if there is an opportunity to gather with other students who feel the same way, who are interested in Spanish language, culture—find the students and create a club, create a group, create something. Talk to whoever it is at the University who may even be able to provide some funding and offer some activities even for the larger population of students. My way of just dealing with things in life is: If it's important enough to you, create it, be a leader, do it yourself, and get support where you can.

**Darius Beckham:** And you know, just as you said, other students were experiencing that. Some transferred, as you were saying. But there's organizations—or could be organizations on campus—that can tackle some of those things. And just to be short, I think what I've found is even though some of those things sometimes fall on students to try to push for some of those changes, there's not one idea or one initiative or program or conference or anything that we wanted to do while I was there that when we came together and went to administration and said, “Can you fund this? Can you support this? Can we create some

institutional support around this?” where we turned away. It was always accepted. It was always implemented. It was always supported and built up. And it does suck, as Daria was saying, that we have to sometimes bring those things to the University. I think the general sentiment is, sometimes if administration doesn’t recognize the need or is not focused on the need, then, nothing changes, so if there are organizations or opportunities for you all to make your voice heard and have the University respond to that in a sensitive manner, then I would take advantage of that.

**Daria Graham:** I know it can be lonely first year as well, so as much as possible, please encourage folks to go to MEC. I’ve heard multiple folks on this call saying MEC or OMA or the Afro-American Center was why they stay connected. I believe that’s the same for our Latinx students, for Asian American students. If you can grab them by the arm, it’s going to be easier. But as much as you can, get those students connected. And we will take one last question from Trevor Collier.

**Trevor Collier:** I’m the interim dean at the School of Business. I wanted to thank all the panelists for taking time to come speak to us today. I think it’s great to hear your perspectives, your experience, while you were students at UD. I learned a lot listening to you all today. I think it’s very interesting how many of you, the piece that you remember that was so helpful was BATU, and that’s something I’m not very familiar with, something I need to look into. But my question is at the unit level. I heard Dr. Smith talk about feeling sort of alone in the School of Engineering. And when I looked at the School of Engineering, they’ve got a Diversity in Engineering Center that has a Multi-Ethnic Engineers program and a Women Engineering program and has an International Engineering Student Engagement program, and I look at that as sort of like an ideal model—something that would be great to have in the business school. But if that wasn’t actually helping people, what could be done within the units to help our multi-ethnic students feel more comfortable and more a part of the community within these units?

**Marcus Smith:** I’m not sure if the center for diversity and inclusion was there when I was around, but I believe what was there was the Minority Engineering Program, which was something that I didn’t lean on to until later in my tenure at the University of Dayton. But I guess had I known about the resources that were available to me when I first

stepped foot on the campus, that would have alleviated a lot of the stress and pain that I endured just adjusting to the learning curve and getting adjusted to campus life and being in the School of Engineering.

**Daria Graham:** The Minority Engineering Program was under Laura's direction, and it's now a center with the other organizations all in that diversity center.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Is there anything on the business side, in the political science side? What exists today? Because what we were used to may be very different now. What is there for students to tap into? Is there a Latino group? And if they're not there, maybe that's where we need to start. I believe in surveys. Some will speak their minds in a BATU setting or a group setting, but some will speak more freely in a survey. And then also have what some of the recommendations are because I don't know what truly is at the disposal of a student as far as an organization. I know when I came in, I had to go online and kind of look at all the slew of organizations that did exist, but it didn't necessarily tell me what was diverse and what was not, and maybe that's what we need to tease out—what do we have and what is needed to help close the gap.

**Daria Graham:** I appreciate you asking that Lisa, because one of the things that I struggle with, Dr. Collier, is that your alumni program in the School of Business—I believe it's a Black alumni program, spearheaded by a current student. It's OK to have a student—it's important for students have those experiences—but students also need to go to class. So my recommendation is actually having that a formalized position. Dr. John Mittelstaedt [the late former dean of the School of Business Administration] started the Multi-Ethnic Business Leaders program, but it's run by a student. That's a great opportunity to have an official professional person staffed in that position.

TC: I agree wholeheartedly, and it's actually something we're working on right now. Dr. Sweet is already providing some leadership and guidance to that group, but you're right, it is currently run by a student, so there's a succession problem that if we can have one person who's going to be there continuously, I think that would be much improved.

**Daria Graham:** I'm looking at the squares and all of us are saying go—that's a great place to start. I want to capture one last question: What sorts of programs or platforms would you suggest to connect Black



alumni with students, so that we can build that relationship and networking, particularly for people who are passionate about social sciences, humanities, and the arts?” Which also kind of piggybacks on that question of what is there for students not in engineering or STEM. Suggestions?

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** So let me ask a little bit further with that question. Do they want to get connected earlier in their career of being a student or later, as they are developing to move into more of a career path. Those are two very different questions.

**Amira Fitzpatrick:** Both. I feel like there’s a lot of resources for STEM majors and Black people in the STEM fields, but I’m sociology and criminal justice, and I feel like there’s a lack of representation from Black alumni in the social sciences, but also in other fields like humanities, art, business. I’m wondering what a good way is for Black students to be able to connect to Black professionals in those fields. Also, what programs can we implement at UD to have those supporting networks while we’re at school here?

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** I think there’s there are two ways to do that. No. 1, I feel that there is a responsibility to have tools available and to help train students on how—that’s the networking piece. A great tool to use that everyone is aware of in the work environment is LinkedIn. There should be a networking pool already available with your alumni who have said, “I’m agreeable to have a student reach out to me,” and the students should be able to go to that directory with their major to begin that networking relationship. If these networking events are not encompassing all the students’ major curriculums, then then that networking event is not successful. So you’ve got to get your network tools in place so a student can actually go find what to do, where to go, and who could they reach out to. LinkedIn is a great tool because you can filter by university, majors, and careers, and you get people that potentially could help you. Also, University of Dayton has alumni chapters across the country. I think that is another place that we can help students like yourself get more exposed to leaders within your field.

**Amira Fitzpatrick:** I use LinkedIn quite a bit. I just am still finding it pretty challenging to find particularly Black alumni in things I’m interested in. Through Flyer Connection, I have a mentor, and she’s

wonderful, but she's a white mentor, so her experiences are very different in the professional field than a Black mentor's would be.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** Do we have a roster of all our minority graduates?

**Daria Graham:** It sounds like a great suggestion. And Carlos is giving me the thumbs up. His role is to connect alumni with students, and what a great thing it would be to have a directory of sorts.

Now I would like to give us a snapshot of the resources that you could offer if MEC, Dr. Allen, or a student, or alumni services were to contact you. Is there a subject, a program, any kind of resource, you could offer current students?

**Marcus Smith:** I am an engineer, so I'm in the same community. I work locally at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base within Air Force Research Laboratory. I did my Ph.D. at Georgia Tech, so those interested in any of those, I am available for mentorship, as a resource, as help with resume building, whatever it may be.

**Darius Beckham:** If you're interested in any facet of local government, economic development, social services in general, I believe I can be helpful. I'm formerly a legislative aide to Mayor Whaley's office and met a ton of C-suite contacts there. Now I'm a project manager with the Hall Hunger Initiative, so we're focused on fighting food insecurity in Dayton. Really, anything that is related to social sciences, I'm sure I can connect you with the right people and make an introduction.

**Lisa Rich-Milan:** I'm in pharma biotech labs, which is also considered diagnostics and clinical trials, so we could explore strategic planning and thinking, sales, marketing, branding, finance, profit and loss statements, accounting for business, resume building, building your brand as a professional, operations, running a packaging line, quality, and regulatory affairs.

**Angela Heath:** I will be happy to help students with crafting their intros—their elevator pitch speeches. I do coaching around self-employment and micro-business entrepreneurship, so anybody thinking of side hustles and starting their own thing. I also help a lot of young people take their area of interest along with any other passions and create something new. It's all about using what you have and communicating it well.

**Daria Graham:** I can put my hands on 100 years' worth of alumni. I believe in the five degrees of separation so whatever you need, whatever field you're in, I think that the University of Dayton Black alumni are so connected that we could find you a resource in anything you need. Thank you all for your time.



# Testimonies

*Joel R. Pruce*

The testimonies session was an interactive listening and dialogue event in which attendees listened together to stories submitted in advance that documented the Black student experience on campus. The goal of the session was to convene student staff and faculty to engage in a generative and critical conversation motivated by actual experiences. In attendance were students, staff, and faculty; together, we listened to four audio clips submitted by current and former students who narrated campus experiences. We listened together to cultivate a shared experience and baseline understanding to motivate the discussion. After each story, attendees met in smaller groups to react to what they heard, and they captured key takeaways. The resulting discussion succeeded in making connections across generations of students, identifying the essential nature of support services for Black students in their time at UD and demonstrating the necessary resilience exhibited by Black students in their efforts to merely make it through college.

What became clear to all was the consistency in the Black experience over time—students, staff, and faculty—and included the constant awareness of their minoritization; the pursuit of comfortable spaces where they were less likely to encounter racism; the normalcy of micro- and macroaggressions; the question of belonging; and the stress and weight of additional labor made necessary by the lack of extracurricular opportunities for Black students or the need for Black staff and faculty to support UD's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Black members of the UD community shoulder these burdens as part of their mere existence on campus. They also develop survival strategies and adaptations that allow them to get by—to work effectively and to study and excel. But the

notion of their life on campus as “survival” returned in our discussion regularly.

“Survival” is not a fair or reasonable standard that we would wish to apply to Black members of the UD community; it’s an exceedingly low-bar that falls far short of the experience described through UD’s ethos. That said, fostering community is the single most important and positive element of the Black experience on campus—but “community” in this sense is a set-aside, carved-out collective, segregated from the broader (read: white majority) UD community. Student development is an indispensable component, though students exercise entrepreneurship to create experiences and spaces for themselves. So, even as Black students find comfort, safety, and peace on campus, they do so separately.

Living a dual experience, Black students express feeling warmth and joy while among their cultivated Black community and share pride in constituting that community, though they also report being acutely aware of their status in spaces they cannot control, like in classrooms or while walking through student neighborhoods.

This duality is most pronounced due to the disconnect between the expectations the University sets and the actual lived experience of the students who matriculate here. Expectations in this sense are communicated through recruitment materials and the way in which we talk about ourselves, starting from the president and trickling throughout the units. The one-dimensional and uncritical sense of “community” fails to take division into account—and even relegates those who feel excluded or marginalized, further exacerbating this feeling.

UD advertises itself as an inclusive space, but Black students consistently express feeling like outsiders who are not only not welcome but often feel under threat, forced to adopt a guarded posture. While nobody suggested that we promote a narrative of “hardship” for obvious reasons, we did discuss how the rosy picture we paint of UD is not equally shared by all campus members. “Resilience” or “overcoming obstacles” are accurate terms, perhaps, but still may not read well on a brochure or a digital ad.

We concluded with a reaffirmation of the indispensable nature of student development to support and cultivate the Black student community on campus, as well as acknowledging that the expectations we set for students should be recalibrated.

# Research Assistant Reflection

*Jalen Turner<sup>1</sup>*

I've been at the University of Dayton for three years, coming from Milwaukee, where I had been majority of my life. Since being at UD I've



*Jalen Turner*

learned many valuable lessons about how our history impacts us. As a freshman, taking HST 150, I fell in love with the subject because of its rippling effects in time, such as the Atlantic slave trade that is still affecting its descendants today. In my time here I have experienced covert racism and implicit bias and am using my current education to explore more into why these acts are still occurring.

As a student researcher for the University, I've tried to keep an open mind about the past actions and stances the University has taken and not let my current biases influence my research. During the archive dive into the University's history of Black students and faculty, I learned more about how the student body used to react to injustices and have taken these stories with me. As a Black woman at the University, I feel a sense of responsibility to point out the wrongs and rights of the institution and give constructive feedback into what can be changed because as the most oppressed population in America, I believe that our perspectives are valuable.

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<sup>1</sup> Jalen Turner is a junior history major, Class of 2022.

There were challenges in finding information pertaining to Black faculty and staff at the University, such as the first integration into the University's staff. Using methods I learned in my other history classes, I was able to find hints toward Black faculty integration and the first Black faculty member (1964). This experience has been the highlight of my time at UD because of the work I was able to do in helping the University reflect on its past. It is especially important to understand where we come from and who created the paths before us. If it wasn't for the Black students at UD who first attended and graduated, my graduating class of Black students could have been smaller.

As students who work on race at UD graduate, we should be mindful to continue their work so it will not get lost and forgotten about. It's also valuable information for faculty, staff and students at the University to know about, rather than the popular history of the Marianist institution. I hope to see the symposium re-created and continued and as common as the Stander symposium in the spring. The history of race at UD is important to identify and understand, especially as we move forward in a country that is learning to be anti-racist and anti-biased.



## Faculty and Staff Perspectives

*Tom Morgan and Denise James (moderators); Jalen Turner (presenter);  
Donna Cox, Andrew Eywaraye, Herbert Woodward Martin, Kathleen  
Henderson (panelists)*

**Tom Morgan:** Welcome everyone. My name is Tom Morgan. I am a faculty member here at UD, and I'm the director of race studies. Today's panel provides perspectives of Black faculty and staff members. To better account for issues in our past and to better foreground some of those ideas, we're going to do several things today. We have four faculty and staff members who we did short interviews with, and I'll play some clips. Then we'll have the chance to reflect.

**Denise James:** Jalen Turner is a junior history major who has worked with us on this part of the project, and I will let her talk more about that. We envisioned that part of what we ought to be doing if we're going to think about race at UD is to look to our past—what we know about it, what we don't know about it—to think about where we are today, so I'm happy to introduce Jalen and have her share some things with us.

**Jalen Turner:** Hello. I am a third-year history major from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In my initial meeting with Dr. James, she told me there would be two parts to this research project: the profiles on Father Paul Marshall and Professor Dennis Greene and then an archive dive on the integration of Black faculty and staff at UD.

My research for Father Paul Marshall and Professor Dennis Greene was a shorter process, and the information was very easy to find. I used the UD memorials for Father Paul Marshall, who was the rector, and Dr. Dennis Greene, who before joining the faculty at the UD School of Law was one of the founders of the popular disco group Sha Na Na.

My archive work was a little harder process. I received help from the archivist, Kristina Schulz, and she sent me a survey from 1985 by Sarah Harris. It was a survey about Black students and faculty experiences at UD, and from what I found on there about Black staff is that they felt as though they weren't supported and that they had to prove themselves.

The method that I used to continue my research was "reading the silences," which is learning about the lives and ideas of people who didn't leave direct textual evidence. The resources that I used were the *Flyer News* archive, *The Black Perspective*, and the UD yearbooks.

The yearbook included a directory of all faculty and staff at UD. It was a little harder though because the directory for the yearbook just had names and no pictures, so you couldn't see who was a Black faculty and staff member and who was not.

I used BATU information to pinpoint areas of interest between 1955 and the 1970s. For example, *The Black Perspective* gave me a jump-off point for understanding Black faculty at UD better. I would use milestones from the BATU timeline and try to cross reference them in the *Flyer News* archive or *The Black Perspective*. I also used *Uhuru* volumes to get a better understanding of Black student life at UD.

I did encounter some challenges with the organization of the *Flyer News* volume numbers. I also had trouble in the UD yearbooks to try and find milestones for Black organizations such as Alpha Phi Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta and Alpha Kappa Alpha. I wasn't able to really find them mentioned in the yearbooks when they were founded.

There really is a lack of documentation for faculty at UD prior to the 1980s. After that, it's routine and well-documented, but prior to that, it's really hard to find a mention of Black faculty and staff, what they did, the positions they held, if they were involved in anything else on the campus. Black voices were not really commonplace in the regular campus media; it was more common in Black student-produced newspapers and journals.

Some things that would make this process easier are updating the archive with the milestones of Black students and trying to find missing newspapers. What was the most interesting to find in the Black student-published newspapers and journals was the activities that they did with Black students so they could bring them in more, make them feel more at home and comfortable at a predominantly white institution — like a clip-

and-save listing of Black faculty in *The Black Perspective* and the Black faculty and student dance, which was a way for students and faculty to get connected because the Black student population was very small at UD, and the Black faculty population was also very small.

**Denise James:** Thanks so much for that, Jalen. People come and go in institutions, and we need to intentionally collect their stories and organize them in ways that are accessible. I think one of the things that the archival research has done is help us see some distinctly similar ways in which the demographics have mattered on the University campus when it comes to faculty, staff, and students of color, but in particular faculty, staff, and students who are Black and how that lived experience shares lots of qualities but perhaps does not share some. So one of the goals of this particular project is to think about what it means to talk about faculty and staff. University of Dayton is an employer across all sorts of levels. We are citizens of the University in lots of ways, and what we contribute as faculty and staff is what creates the place. We have longevity that students do not have. We hope that this will develop into a deeper dive into the University of Dayton's past and thinking about the lives of Black faculty and staff. This isn't the culmination of a project but rather a beginning of thinking about learning from and remembering that past because if we don't cultivate these things, we lose them. This is what we're doing today. Though it's woefully incomplete, we're going to feature the voices of Black faculty and staff who have contributed to the life of our University, many of whom keep the University running and going.

I'm going to share with you some snippets from four interviews that Dr. Tom Morgan and I did in February with faculty and staff folks who have been at the University of Dayton for a combined almost 120 years or maybe a little over that. From them, we get a sense of institutional memory. Some of them were students here and then became staff and faculty; some of them have come from far afield to be with us here:

- Donna Cox, professor of music
- Andrew Evwaraye, professor of physics
- Herbert Woodward Martin, professor emeritus of English
- Kathleen Henderson, director of college access, transition, and success

[Dr. James shares the video, which is available at [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/global\\_voices\\_4/1](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/global_voices_4/1) with subtitles; transcripts follow.]

### **The Rev. Dr. Donna M. Cox**

I came to UD in 1990 and just celebrated 30 years of employment on campus.

From the moment I arrived on campus, I felt welcomed. There are a few reasons that might have been so. First, I was one of four Black faculty hired in 1990, and I believe we nearly doubled the number of Black faculty on campus. Second, my position was envisioned and advocated for by Debra Moore, who was the director of what was then Minority Affairs. There was a student-run gospel choir that was very important to the Black students, and it constantly struggled. Working with the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Music, they



*Donna Cox*

created a position that was jointly funded by student development and the College for my first three years. Because of that, I came in with a community of Black folk who were committed to my success. Third, I had spent my career working in public school and community college, so I didn't realize that there were artificial lines I was not supposed to cross. As a result, I boldly went where other folk might not have tread. Vernellia Randall [now professor emerita of law] and I met with Amie Revere Taylor [now professor emerita of counselor education and human services] early on for advice on navigating the tenure process—not one person in either of our departments or schools had sat us down to have these discussions—and out of that grew the formal gatherings of the Black faculty. I was very

comfortable with President Ray Fitz and Provost Jim Heft. The fact that they knew me by name—knew my children and husband—made me want to stay on campus despite being invited to interview at other schools.

While I was very comfortable with the administration, there were challenges with students who were *not* used to having a Black faculty member. In my first year, I ended up with a group of singers and a community choreographer who made my life miserable. From having a small group of them stop by my office leaving a message addressed to “Donna,” to having them tell me what music they would sing and that they were accustomed to selecting who made it into the group so they could choose people “like themselves,” to two girls discussing their preference for “nigger toes” for Christmas nuts, I had never encountered a group of people such as this. I did not have the language at that time to know they were, beyond their overt racism, operating in their presumed privilege and fully expected me to get with *their* program. They had met the wrong woman, though I admit to going home crying after several rehearsals. When I say it was ugly, I mean that. At one point, I told the chair it was them or me; it was not going to be both. By the end of the year, most of them had quit; I had fired the community member and brought in singers I could work with. Though I never again had such an experience with a group of students, it was not to be the last time I encountered individual students who challenged my right to be on campus or the legitimacy of my ability to teach them. I was an anomaly in the Department of Music as well.

Though I had wonderful colleagues, there were microaggressions. I recall being asked in a meeting if there were scholarships for Black students on campus. Having only been on campus myself for a matter of months, I wondered how I was expected to know this information. Someone once apologized to a visiting family because I was wearing (pressed and creased) jeans. I was, in fact, “called to the office” for wearing (again, pressed and creased) jeans when my group went to perform at a

nursing home. I found myself constantly interpreting Black culture—especially as it related to my scholarship, the work I was doing with the gospel choir, and the few Black students we had in our programs.

I recall very clearly the day I decided I could not be both Black and female on campus. It was at a women's dinner. This was in the days pre-Women's Center, and there were a core group of women working very hard to bring women's issues to the fore. As I sat in Barrett Dining Room listening to the plans to advance the causes of women on campus, it became clear to me that I did not have bandwidth for two causes. It would have to be one or the other. As soon as I could, I left the room knowing that I would need to fully align with and commit myself to advancing the issues and needs of Black faculty and students at UD; there were plenty of women on campus but very few Black people to carry the torch. I never regretted that decision.

Lest I give the impression that my life has been one long battle for justice at UD, let me say — it has. From asking the deans and upper administration if they would support regular conversations with Black faculty over dinner, to participating in nearly every iteration of diversity work in the past 30 years and serving as chair of the Department of Music, it has been a battle. At the same time, I can honestly say I love UD. I've had a very good career here. My work has been supported, and it's been home.

**What do you think the University could do to improve the experiences of Black people on campus?** I openly admit that had it not been for the staff of the Office of Minority Student Affairs/Diverse Student Populations, I may not have stayed at UD. Though their charge was to support students, the administrators knew that meant supporting Black faculty as well. The little office in O'Reilly Hall was home to the Black faculty. We were included in lunches. When Black guest speakers were

brought to campus, we had special discussions and a meal with them. I have fond memories of sitting, paper plates balanced on our legs as we chatted with Cornel West or other visiting speakers. This was a space for us to kick our shoes off, so to speak, and just *be*. It was a safe space. While there is rightly an emphasis on the needs of the students in MEC today—and faculty are certainly encouraged to drop in and hang out—it's not quite the same experience. This is not in any way an indictment of them; they are doing an amazing job. I'm concerned that there is no such place for Black faculty to gather without an expectation of solving the University's diversity/social justice problems. With so few Black faculty on campus, it is very difficult to form community, a critical need at a predominantly white institution. We talk a lot about campus climate, but I am still not convinced people really connect the dots between campus climate and the feelings of isolation Black faculty experience on a daily basis. There are 30 Black faculty out of over 600 tenure-track and tenured faculty currently on campus. I believe there ought to be more intentionality about providing space and funding for Black faculty to gather on campus and to go to conferences and meetings where we can be with other Black scholars and artists. These things fuel the work and feed the soul.

Improving the experiences of Black folk on campus is so deeply connecting with improving University systems it's difficult to tease out. What I will say is that the administration needs to know who the Black faculty are and what each person contributes to the community. There is a wealth of talent and knowledge that can and should be utilized—not used. Our stories are important and can be very helpful. In fact, we need to tell the stories; they need to hear them. Our stories shed light on things happening at the grassroots level. And it's often these stories being unheard that eventually lead people to separate from the institution.

## Dr. Andrew Ewwaraye

My name is Andrew Ewwaraye. I came to University of Dayton in 1961, just after I finished high school, and the question people usually asked me was, “How did you hear about the University of Dayton? You are ... so far away in Nigeria. How did you hear about us?” Well, I went to a secondary school in Nigeria run by the Marianists. The Marianists ran that school, and they told us all about University of Dayton—most of them went to UD—and how great life is in America, but they did tell us about (unclear) and before I registered, I was summoned to



*Andrew Ewwaraye*

go and see a counselor who would discuss with me my academic plan. So the guy was in St. Mary. So I went and talked to the guy. The guy said, “What do you want to study? What do you plan to study?” I said, “I want to study physics.” The guy was holding a pen. When I said I wanted to study physics, he put it down and said, “You people do not do well in the sciences.” OK, so a young boy from Nigeria, full of confidence, I said, “How many Nigerians have you met for you to make that conclusion?” He didn’t answer, but he said, “In three months, you’re going to come here crying for me to change you to physical education.” I said that would not happen, so that ended our conversation.

So anyway, the following week, we started attending classes, and I met a lot of people. Good people. Brother Mann was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. To my young colleagues, they think that Mann is an award [n.b the Mann Award is given to the outstanding senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, named for Brother Leonard A. Mann, S.M.]. Mann



to me was a human being. I interacted with him; he was the dean. I met Dr. Bueche [Frederick J. Bueche]—greatest man I’ve ever met. He was committed to my success. He told me, “This is how you study,” “This is how you go and get your driver’s license,” “This is where you go and get your eyes tested” -- that guy was a lifesaver, and we remained friends until he died. He was my great mentor.

After I graduated from UD, I went to graduate school—University of Saskatchewan in Canada—that’s where I got my Ph.D. in 1969, 1970. Actually, I was supposed to graduate from UD in 1965, but because of summer school and carrying overload, I was able to finish a semester before my class, so I graduated in 1964 instead of June 1965. So I went to Canada, and I studied there until 19—I got my Ph.D. in 1970. Then I thought I was prepared now to change the world. OK, let’s take it into segment: As a student, when that counselor told me, “You people do not do well in sciences,” it did not ... it did not ring a bell. It was a year or two later that I remembered that. What this man was saying was that, “You Black people are not good in sciences.” So that was a battle cry. It drove me. I said, “I’m going to go show this guy that even though I’m a Black person, I can study this subject.” So I spent all my time doing that.

When I graduated, I took my transcript, and I went to see him. I said, “Do you remember?” He said, “Yeah, yeah.” “You look at it, my friend,” I say, “Are you seeing physics?” I said, “I’m not only physics, I’m graduating in physics.” OK, he had an excuse: “Oh, your case is different because you’re a foreigner. You don’t have the same background—” I say, “OK, all right,” but I met, as I said before, I met a lot of good people, and there were a lot of people who were mocking me because I have an accent; I didn’t have too much money, so I don’t wear jeans—because I couldn’t buy new jeans, I was wearing my baggy trousers I’d brought from Nigeria; people made fun of me. And at that time the ’60s [and ’50s] were very turbulent. The African countries were struggling with the British; there was a big war

going on between Kenya and the British, so there was a movement called Mau Mau—the Mau Mau movement. People were calling me Mau Mau. “Oh, here comes Mau Mau.” I’m not even from Kenya. So I took all those as people being ignorant. They are not—I would point out to them that there was Bay of Pigs. I said, “So are you Bay of Pigs?” “No but you’re Mau Mau.” No. I just leave them as being ignorant.

So I came as a full rank [professor]. I dedicated myself to being a good teacher, to try to be a mentor. I said, “I am here because I had good mentors.” OK, so I also spent a lot of time on my research. I said there are three things you will be judged on this campus: a good teacher, a good researcher, and are you serving the community. OK, so if you are good in these three, they may hate you, but there’s nothing they can do to you, so I try very hard to be a good teacher. I spend a lot of time on my research, and I belong to many committees, OK, I say. But outside my department I tell somebody, “I’m teaching physics.” “Oh, so you’re teaching mostly labs.” I went back to 1961, where that man said, “You people—,” so I don’t know physics? Only labs I can teach? The one that really touched my heart was a dean of a school—not the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences—a dean of one of our schools. When I told him, “I teach physics,” he said, “Oh, so you are teaching mostly introductory courses?” When I go back to my department and I relay this to my colleagues, it was like, “Oh that’s racism. Let’s fight him.” I said, “No, that’s not how you fight this. You fight this by being successful.”

So anyway, this has been my— So, UD is a great school. I like UD. I like UD people, but they speak in tongues. You have to listen. “Are you still enjoying your courses?” What he’s telling you is, “When are you going to retire?” He’s not going to ask you, “When are you going to retire?” because you may be offended or people may call it racism, so he’s going to tell you, “Oh, are you still enjoying this? Oh, so you are teaching mostly labs or mostly introductory courses?” When this man asked me

this question, I was teaching quantum mechanics, the most—the hardest subject in our field, so this has been my experience when I came as a faculty member, but I had tremendous influence over Black students.

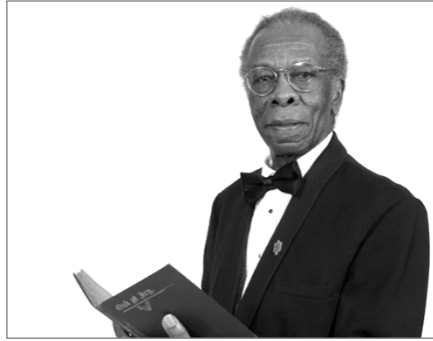
My view is that the University of Dayton is not a blatant racist place. There's no sign that says, "No Blacks are allowed in the senate ... meeting." But people—good people—ask you, "Oh so you're going to senate? I'm surprised that you're going." So this—that makes the atmosphere so uncomfortable. Because good people—"good people" quotation marks—"good people" ask—ask you questions they would not normally ask white people. But the only way this can be rectified—to improve the climate—you know climate is very toxic—to improve the climate is true education because these people are—they are ignorant. You know, you can be a dean. You can be a professor of mathematics. You can still be ignorant—ignorant about people.

So it is true education that Denise [Dr. V. Denise James, who is interviewing Dr. Ewwaraye] can be a professor of philosophy. When I leave, I want people to remember that this man tried hard to be a good teacher. He may be a lousy teacher, but it is not—it's not a lack of effort, and he worked very hard on his—on his research and tried very hard to participate in community, committees, and all kinds of things. But more importantly I want especially the Black students to know that I value—that this man valued our intelligence. This man knew that we have something. I mean that would be sufficient for me.

## Dr. Herbert Woodward Martin

I arrived in 1970, and I think I retired officially when my granddaughter was born, which would mean 2002 so from '70 to 2002, and I think that that's—what, 32 years? Yeah. And then I added onto that three years.

It's been—it's—  
According to my mother, it's been a fair run because I was only supposed to stay here I think three years. Since I'd given three years to



*Herbert Martin*

the Aquinas people I was going to give three years to the official Catholic people and then three years to the Protestants, three years to the nonbelievers, and three years to the Jews, and then I would be done. I could do whatever it is I wanted to do. I thought that I had serviced, as best I could, humanity, and so then—but my wife—my mother intervened and said, “Why are you hopping from job to job?” And I thought, “Because I can.”

Well in her day, if you got a job, which was Depression, you stayed there. It was a job for life, and somebody that I worked with in New York in the '60s told me that that's what it was—she was Jewish, and she said, “If you got a job, you stay there for life. I don't understand these kids who come for three months and then they're gone—come for one year and then they're gone.” And I said, “It's because they can.” You know it's because they don't have to stay here forever. But she and my mother did not quite understand people who navigated from job to job to job.

My mother convinced me that I should stick it out, and so I never ever put in applications for anywhere else. I just stayed. As far as I was concerned, I was the first of the Black faculty

members along the way, but now you tell me there's somebody who preceded me in the '60s or thereabouts, but I don't know who that was, nor do I know what department they were in. I think there's one—I had to remember his name his name was Professor [Raymond M.] Herbenick, and I think that there may have been either a grant that was offered by the University or somehow the University was connected to that grant, or it was funds that somehow or other the Marianist brothers had set aside and you could tap into them. So it was something which I think any professor on the faculty, and that included everybody from A to Z might decide, "Gee, I'm going to try for this fellowship or this grant and see if I am not worthy of it," and I can remember that Professor Herbenick came to me and said, "Aren't you next in line," for the X amount of whatever that fund was, and I said, "No, I don't think so," and he said, "Yes, I think you're next in line," and I said, "Well, I don't think I am, and if I am, I'm not going to apply for it, so if you're behind me, then you're next in line." And I thought that was—that was really quite the thing for him to do, that—that he thought that I was in front of him rather than behind him or however he may have placed it, but I always felt very, very complimented that—that he thought that I was next in line, which meant that he just saw me as another person in line. He didn't see me as Black, he didn't see me as whatever it was—but that I was literally next in line, and I should have that opportunity. And I've always sort of felt that that was partly his upbringing and certainly not mine, but I always felt complimented by that.

I'm not sure that absolutely everybody on the faculty felt that way, and nobody ever expressed it in those terms, but Professor Herbenick—he gets that place in my memory—that—that says thank you, thank you, thank you, for ever and ever and ever and ever because it was a worthy thing for him to do as a human being.

I think maybe the only time that I came near being fired was when I voted to have Allen Ginsberg come to campus, and I

forgot, but he read some outrageous poem about being gay, and all I can remember is this lady grabbing her child and sailing out of the reading with her child in the air because she sustained it by that strength in her hands and she disappeared. And the next thing I knew, the secretary was saying, “Oh, you probably shouldn’t have invited that man Ginsberg to the campus because blah blah blah blah blah blah blah, and I hit the ceiling, and I said, “Well, when Dr. [B.J.] Bedard [chair of the Department of English] comes back to his office, I don’t care who is scheduled in front of me; I want to see him right away. She [laughing] had the poor secretary’s death. She never gossiped anymore after that.

It’s for the most part been a good run, as I would say. I’ve had a great time. I think I did what I was supposed to do. I think I accomplished something along the way. I knew that people were waiting and watching to see if I was going to publish any scholarly materials, and so I did. People were waiting and watching in the wings to see if I was going to produce any creative books, and so I did, and because I felt like from somewhere other than what I knew, I got this talent, I thought that I was supposed to develop it and to use it as well as I could and as best as I could, and so those things I have always been mindful of. [musical transition]

## Kathleen Henderson

I first came to UD in 1977 as a student. I'm a graduate of Jefferson Township High School here in Dayton and came to the University of Dayton as a first-year student. That was part one, and then part two of Kathleen came when I started working in 1982, and I began working in the law school as a faculty secretary. I did that as a way to finance my degree to complete it because I wasn't such a great saver, and I knew tuition remission would cover me to finish my bachelor's degree. I



*Kathleen Henderson*

was in the School of Business. At that time, I think there might have been one or two in the class with me—Black students in the class with me—and so, in addition to being intimidated by being in a predominantly white school and hearing kids from Alter [Archbishop Alter High School] or CJ [Chaminade Julianne High School]—you know, my perception was private schooling gave you more than public schooling, and being in the School of Business and learning some years later—that wasn't even some years later, but learning—that the dean at the School of Business at that time did not believe women belonged in business, and being this little brown girl in business, it was not the most comforting of places.

I think to know that administration matters, and those around you matter—matter—again, I think—I'm blessed that people have always seen me for me where maybe for some other staff members they have not been as fortunate to be around people who recognize—again I'm unapologetically Black, so when that question comes up, “Well, Kathleen ... who do you see yourself as, a woman or—when those two people behind me [photos of her parents on bookshelves] knew that they were expecting a

child, they were expecting a Black child; we did not know sex—so I am Black first; I am female second I am Christian third. Those come into play, and to have people recognize me and see me—actually see me—for all those pieces, because I’m not going to shy away from it, and I don’t want anyone else to shy away from it—I think it has allowed for me to have some authentic conversations.

My hope and my wish is for others—other people of color—at the institution to have that same gift, to have that same opportunity. What I need from you, though, is to be able, for you to hear me, for you to sometime allow me to just be—instead of me trying, feeling at times like I have to make you comfortable with the fact that I am comfortable with who I am. You might not be comfortable being white, but I sure as hell am pretty damned comfortable being Black. Hear them. Listen and actually hear. Chances are—University, as Bette Davis would say in one of her movies, “Buckle your seat belts; it’s going to be a bumpy ride”—buckle your seatbelt. Chances are, it’s going to be bumpy. Chances are, it’s going to be uncomfortable for you to hear some of what you hear. But recognize we’re living it, and so I can’t afford for you to be uncomfortable and leave the table because when you do, then I’m totally exposed. We are making choices to be at this institution. We are making choices to work and walk amongst you. We—I hesitate to speak for all, but I want to say—we want you to make that choice to be with us as well. So again, it means sometimes, it’s going to be uncomfortable, but that’s growth. That’s growth.

I’ve made a choice to stay because someone needs to be here, in my view, someone needs to be here to welcome new people in. It doesn’t mean that it’s always going to be the right thing, but at least sometimes, to have someplace or somebody that you can—who looks like you, who may have some experiences similar to you, but someone who can understand. Sometimes it’s just that look across the room that, “OK, here we go.” I often think of the diversity because I can’t be every place.



So, what are we doing across campus with images? I want families, when they come and tour the campus, to be able to see: statues that reflect people of color—that reflect, you know, the place—1935 when women were first fully admitted to the University—that those ancestors and experiences are with you even when I’m not.

Because you came through that era where ... it was polite to say, “When I see you, I don’t see color,” to which my response was always, “Then you really need to go get your glasses checked, your eyes checked.” Then, I was much smaller—now I’m much heavier, but I would say, “Because I’m a pretty good-sized Black woman. If you can’t see that I’m a Black woman, then you really don’t see me.” You were taught ... it’s carefully taught—that’s what I love in Rogers and Hammerstein’s “South Pacific,” when he says, “You’ve been carefully taught who to love, who to hate.” You were carefully taught that that was the right thing to say without recognizing that simple phrase means that you deny everything, then, about me—because if you don’t see the color, then you don’t see the history. And if you don’t see the history, then you think, when I tell you what I’m feeling and experiencing today, it’s just me. And it’s not. So part of the reason I kept saying, “I need you to see me,” I’ve been blessed that you’ve seen me. I want us to be comfortable enough to see everyone—and all of who God has made them to be.

[Video closes to the music of Ebony Heritage Singers]

### **Commentary following video**

**Denise James:** This was a great project to undertake. Tom Morgan and I got to interview our colleagues who have been influential to us. They are here to talk with us. One of the things that I realized the first time we tried this symposium on race and really focused on what is in the archive and what isn’t is that there are lots of stories to tell. One of the stories has always been about who was the first Black faculty person on campus, and I think there’s a really interesting story to tell because there

are folks who appear, and then they're not at the University anymore. One of the stories to tell about UD is that there were folks who were considered instructional staff at least as early as the late 1950s on campus who were Black. We have Essie Bruce, who worked in the University Libraries as a librarian starting in 1966. And then, when we think about the instructors on campus, there were people who came for a while and did not stay, and some of those stories we may never know fully. I remember looking through UD yearbooks and finding a 1967 picture of Dr. Brenda Frazier, who was an instructor of Spanish who got her Ph.D. at the University of Madrid in Spain. She later became a lawyer and a common pleas judge in Philadelphia. She was the chair of the finance department at Howard for a while. There are lots of stories to tell, and we have a lot to learn from them. We'll share some comments about Dennis Greene and Father Paul Marshall and then open it up to our panelists and discussion.

**Tom Morgan:** Thank you, Denise. I will be talking about Dennis Greene. I spent a long time reading biographies, obituaries, articles, and everything I could find online. In the process, I came across a sort of short clip that he did as part of the Law and Leadership Summer Institute in 2010 where he talks a bit about himself and the program in his own voice. (Morgan shares screen and plays video.)

I knew who Dennis was, but I never interacted with him that much during my time on campus. But in either 2012 or 2013, I randomly happened to be seated next to him on a plane to Chicago. We spent an hour talking about our times at UD. He was actually traveling to back to California to do theater work for the summer, and he talked about looking ahead to 2019 the 50th anniversary of Sha Na Na and the book he wanted to write. He was very excited to hear about the work I had done on Dunbar and asked me to pass along some of that, and a lot of that is made possible by my long-standing relationship with Dr. Herb Martin, another person who's been particularly important in my own personal, professional development. I think it's important to think about his larger legacy and making sure that that legacy is visible to everyone, and that's one reason this panel is particularly important.

**Denise James:** When Dennis Greene's name came up in the planning process, it brought up memories of an interaction with Dennis Greene that actually changed part of my research trajectory. In my second year

here, he and I were coming away from a meeting, and he asked me what sort of work I was doing. He was having a roundtable at the law school on Lorraine Hansberry's Broadway play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Sean Combs had taken on one of the lead roles, and it was a big deal. I mentioned that I was reading this thing about Hansberry as a part of a context of larger Black women's thinking, and he said, "Will you come and talk about Lorraine Hansberry?" and I said, "I don't know, this is just literally my second year here. I have this understanding of her and her history as a queer person of color who really was pushing against the bounds of her society at the time, who felt that she was radically misunderstood. That's the story that I'd come and tell." He said, "That is the story I want you to tell." So he was like, "I'm going back you up. Whatever you say, I'm going to back you up." And since then, I'm thinking about writing about how he has been a significant part of my scholarship.

One of the things that I also do in my scholarship is talk about issues of belonging—of who belongs and what sort of ideologies motivate us to practice and act in certain ways in settings of community. I am a philosopher who's interested in community and belonging, and when I first came to the University of Dayton, it was clear to me that social justice was part of the talk of the place, and so was this notion of community. One of the first people who welcomed me to this community was Father Paul Marshall. Instead of giving some deep discussion of all of his impacts and the experiences I had with him or others, I want to talk about what I see is one of the potential ways forward and why we might want to do this institutional research. Father Marshall was a graduate of the University of Dayton. He came to UD after going to Catholic school. He wasn't around Marianists and was really committed to a type of community-oriented justice practice, and so in the winter of 1996, he told the *Black Alumni Chronicle* newsletter, "I'm a Marianist; I am an African American." And he really wanted to think through how those two identities went together. Later, he would challenge the University to practice building a community of inclusion. He noted, "The greatest challenge to becoming inclusive is the challenge of including African Americans," and then he called for more interaction.

Later, when he was named rector in 2005, he revealed a series of questions: "How do we grow as a community being Catholic and

expressing our African-American heritage? What's the future of the church? What's the future of the Black church? Will we see a real integration of Roman Catholic tradition and African American faith and culture?" And then later he was thinking about institutions and he's quoted as saying, "When you talk about social justice, I'm aware that institutions change the way things are done. There is power and value to be in the church, to work at racial reconciliation and at just and fair relationships. Our own institution is part of the team that's working for justice in the world."

Are we fully integrating everyone into our University? What would that mean, and how important is it for institutions to intentionally foster?

Father Marshall was a man of deep faith who believed it was possible for us to do really difficult work around the issues that race presents to us because it doesn't present to us merely the fact that we are all different-looking people, but rather it is in the social and historical context of racism in the United States that the University of Dayton is the institution that it is. The question is, what sort of institution will we become? A bit of a personal story about Father Marshall and I: A few years after coming to the University—I got here in 2008—we had gone to a breakfast, and it was a breakfast that I was particularly frustrated at, although I don't know that people realized how frustrated I was. It was after something had happened on campus, and there were administrators who were trying to puzzle out what we do—they want Black people to feel better on campus. I was walking away from the breakfast, and I was not feeling particularly better about anything, even though I had just had a breakfast with the provost and president, and somehow, we ended up walking together. I think this was his design because I don't know that we were going the same way. We were having our general "How are you doing" sort of conversation, and he said to me, "I liked your question," because I always asked questions. I said, thanks, and he was one of the few people would follow it up with another question. He said, "No matter what, you keep asking those questions." And that, for me, really set the tone for what I would later see as my role as building a part of the community here at the University of Dayton—to keep asking the questions. We would like to open up for any of our panelists to have a few words, and then we will open it up to a full discussion.

**Kathleen Henderson:** I want to add a piece there to the presentation on Dennis and also and Father Paul, for some may or may not be aware that Dennis's brother is a Catholic priest, so faith for each of those gentlemen, I think, pushed them to do the things that they do, and for me having grown up at the University—I share it with Tom that I always love to share it because it's a part of my story—my grandmother was the weekend cook for the Society of Mary, so I was introduced to the Marianists, so it's no surprise that all the faith comes together. But in each point along the way, faith intersects and pushes us to do for others and even at times to be uncomfortable. It's in that pushing that Father Paul would tell you to keep asking those questions. It was in my young days as a staff person that either Father Gene Contadino or Father Chris Conlon and other vowed Marianists who supported me when I would ask the questions. It's why I feel such a sense of responsibility, because the number of vowed Marianists has dwindled, to always push that question in order for us to grow.

**Denise James:** Thanks so much, Kathleen. Now we can open up for more discussion.

**Tom Morgan:** Part of the framing for this conversation is thinking about where we go from here. What do you want to do to preserve this history more effectively? What lessons have been learned that we need to remember, and how can this legacy may be made more visible? What else is missing that we need to include?

**Denise James:** Dr. Cox has posted a comment. She says these stories are so important. We are people of stories, and stories bring a valuable perspective to the UD landscape that it's easy to overlook, primarily because our voices are so few. I know that Dr. Cox in particular has been really instrumental in figuring out how to have Black faculty voices, but also Black staff voices at the table when some decisions are made or haven't been made. I personally am indebted to her for her advocacy for Black students, faculty, and staff on campus.

**Andrew Ewvaraye:** I want to commend you and Tom for this project of archives because in a society where people depend upon our tradition or our history, when the old man in the village dies, it is like you have burned down the library. So, putting all this story together today, 30 years from now there will be a young philosopher who sees in 2021 what

we have done. I really commend you, and I hope I continue to be a part of the project.

**Denise James:** Our interview was not only the highlight of my week; it's been the highlight of my 2020. There needs to be a whole book, movie, documentary, series. You mentioned the philosopher. What's really interesting is one of the things I found in my research: Father Paul Marshall was a philosophy major here at the University of Dayton. There are just very few professional Black philosophers and certainly very few philosophy majors—so it's interesting what we find in the archive. Our hope is that this is a living, ongoing project, that this is just a beginning of something. We're so happy that people agreed to be the first folks to think about this. I really appreciate that everyone took part.

**Kathleen Henderson:** I so loved the videos, and you did a wonderful job. There is to be a Black alumni reunion coming up. Even if we cannot be in person, I think sharing that video with Black alumni would help future scholars like Jalen Turner and others hopefully not struggle to find those stories or to reconnect with the institution. I know that the archives a couple of years ago put out a call to Black alumni to ask them to share what they have. I think to hear and see Dr. Martin would elicit a lot of good feelings and a lot of good stories.

**Denise James:** I am not oral historian. I'm not a documentary filmmaker. I'm none of those things, but one of the things that this project revealed to me was: There are really high-tech ways to go about these things and more low-tech ways to do this, but we need all of them, and I think institutionally, we need these efforts. There are lots of different types of communities on campus that can benefit from this sort of effort. There are lots more people to talk to and interview. It may not be me and Tom Morgan doing it, but we do think that this doesn't end with today's panel or the videos. I think tomorrow we'll talk more about takeaways. We're in a great technological moment to capture stories and to catalog them and keep them for our institution in ways that we have not been able to before, and I think there are more products to be done. What are the ways that people can build on the legacies and make the connections and act on the ideas that we've had.

**Julius Amin:** First of all, thank you, thank you very much. This is just super. Secondly, I think these stories are so important because they help us to understand change over time. We hear stories of the '60s; we hear

stories in the '80s. What did it mean to be a Black person at the University of Dayton in the 1960s? What did it mean to be a Black person at the University of Dayton in the 21st century? We see themes which are continuous. In the '60s and the '70s and '80s to the present, people are constantly proving themselves. People are still feeling it, clearly, meaning that there's something wrong. It's important to admit that there are issues. Rather than saying we are already doing this and then how do we move forward—if we do not agree that there are issues, that becomes very difficult to move forward. I again applaud you in terms of just hearing these voices. This is really important for us to figure out how to deal with this story.

**Denise James:** I think part of this was to inspire us to figure out what to do with all of these stories. There's just a long list of interesting people who came either to speak, perform, be at the University of Dayton. There is a record of student protests, but there's also, I think, a sense that this is a part of our inherited legacy that we do not take up as part of the spirit of being in community together. Having really hard university-level conversations at the University is a part of what is possible.

**Joel Pruce:** I wonder if, while we're here together and very much in the moment, we could even think about a book or for these things to live somewhere. How do we make these stories accessible? How do we put them in front of people? How do we build this archive—what would we need to do to really continue this work?

**Denise James:** We've discussed this a little as a group, and I know that each of the different subgroups have thought about where this information is going to go next. I know Dr. Amin is really committed to proceedings. I think to do this well, we would really need the institution to be committed to this becoming a product of the institution. The two times that we have come together around this set of issues have been, in some ways, spearheaded by Dr. Amin. I think that is great, and I think it adds to our University conversation. I think it's important, but I do think that collecting, archiving, and sharing stories cannot be a one and done or every now and then; it needs to be ongoing. It has to have a home and people for whom this is a part of their work. How do we carry that on?

**Tom Morgan:** I would add that we think of someone who is a strong archivist as one spends a lot of time reading through old stuff. I do not

think that this type of work should merely be an archive as we think about—put in a box and store it somewhere—that’s not what this work is. It needs to be public-facing. It needs to have a page of its own. It needs to have a space that can be easily updated and added to. It needs to be an ongoing story that’s intimately connected to what our institution is. I don’t necessarily know what that looks like, but I know what I don’t want it to be. I don’t want, in 30 years, students digging through boxes of stuff hoping to find the gem. I want to smack everyone in the face with it in their daily life, that they have to engage with. And this circles me back to some of what Miss Henderson said in her comments: She wants us all to stay at the table. I think it’s important that we stay at the table, even if we’re uncomfortable because that’s part of who we need to be while we’re here.

**Denise James:** Agree. People in the chat are talking about sort of what could be done right is there, you know way that we can talk about UD history, and I think, someone said a museum or having a mini UD history course, and I think that there are lots of history to tell one of the things that happened when I was trying to chase down so we went on a search this time. For you know when do we have you know the integration with university faculty in that and I don’t mean this integration with you know Black faculty I was looking to see you know when is unique faculty integrated right we knew that they were staff persons of color on campus and that there were employees of color on campus who are not considered sort of administrative staff on campus you know from meetings inception, but we were looking to see.

There are lots of different stories to be told. For this symposium, really thinking about racism and anti-Black racism and the Black experience on campus, there are myriads of stories to be told about who we are as folks here at the University of Dayton, and I think often we assume and normalize a sort of experience of the University that actually doesn’t really match the history of the University. How do you think about, as Dr. Lawrence-Sanders points out, those official UD history narratives as something to talk about?

**Herbert Woodward Martin:** When I came, I thought I wanted to see people in whatever areas that they were gifted in. I didn’t often see very many Black people in theater—and certainly none in dance unless you were in DCDC, thanks to Miss Jeraldyn Blunden—but you have to have



people who are committed to the particular art that they are invested in, and none of the Black students, I think, had the percentage that say Sidney Poitier had. And so they didn't try out for plays, and I thought the only way they're going to do that is if they see somebody like themselves on that stage. You have to have people who are committed not only to the sciences, but to the arts as well. And we have to see them, and they have to have something inside of them, and they don't know how you put that in them, that they have to want to do this thing because they are good at it. Or that they are willing to learn how to be good at that and then, once you see that, you know that whoever is coming behind them can do this thing too.

I know I don't know how to make people poets. I don't know how to make people actors. But I do think that something along the way has to be a commitment that they bring to the table saying, "I can do this thing, and you can take a chance on me." I often thought before I went on stage, "Here we are, Mother, making a fool of ourselves." And then, I would think, just before the curtain opened, "It's time to go to work." No time to think about being foolish; you have to produce. And that's the real thing: We have to be able to see people and to see their energy and want to give them the opportunity to display that talent in whatever way it is. You can't just go to the theater and wish that there were Black people there or Asian people acting on the stage. They have to step forward. All over the University you have to see people, know who they are, what they are, how gifted they are, and then encourage that gift and hope that it somehow gets disseminated among all the people who are interested in that particular craft.

**Denise James:** We need to think about what representation is, but also to recognize that having a Black physics professor has meant something for several generations of scientists, not just at the University of Dayton, but in Nigeria and other places, and we have it on campus having the historians and I think how to build on that, as some of the gifts and talents of folks at the University and not have them marginalized but also not taken up as central parts of what the University is trying to do when we go into educating the whole person and thinking very fully about what these sorts of representations mean—for our students but also for each other, to see each other in various roles, to know that there are not just possibilities, but actualities. Dr. Martin had a

30-plus-year career when I first started here 12 years ago. I remember very distinctly having a conversation with Dr. Donna Cox about how it had been her 18th year, and we were talking about how long that was, and then, as I was editing the videos and reading about how long she'd been at the University, I thought, "This is my 12th year." I think about how time in some ways compresses itself, and with students, most of them, we have them for four years, so what does it mean to have that longevity. I know people are talking about digital archives. We have so many possibilities; there lots of little data points, little videos, lots of little things or large things that can gather our attention. Part of what we, I think, as an institution need to do is think about the curation and cultivation of all of these bits. The educational practice, especially around issues of race and representation at the University, is to have some stories to tell—to have ways for students to lock on to their experiences and connect them with the history of the University in a concrete way that takes all of that stuff and makes it alive for them. This project helped me see why I needed this project, why I needed to think about that in my relationship to the work that I do with the University, so I'm glad that people have found parts of this really valuable. I think this is a beginning, and I'm hoping that will grow to other things.

**Tom Morgan:** I came to the University in 2006. I was here several years before I actually realized that Dr. Martin had been retired for several years before I got here because he was publicly visible in the life of department in ways that even current colleagues aren't. I think making his presence known, seen, and felt is important; it's been important for me, and he's touched the lives of many, as are all of our panelists.

**Denise James:** And I want to reiterate one thing I think both Tom and I touched on. Other people have said it, but I'll bring it back. These are people who were going to give us a long perspective on the University. But there were so many other folks. Had this been a different project, we would have talked to you. There are so many other people whose experiences and insights we did not get to, and that is a limitation that we recognize is part of this. There is a story to tell about the experience of people who work on campus, who are hourly employees, who are a vital part of delivering upon the mission of the University, who have experience at the University that is a racialized experience, that is sometimes for good and sometimes for not—and documenting that

history as a part of the University is, I think, vitally important. It's a topic that the University should take up, especially if what we intend to do is continue to build a community that that is wanting and desiring to be anti-racist. There's lots to be done, and probably that will always necessarily be unfinished and incomplete. Part of the challenge is to recognize that there's so much to be done and to take that up as part of all of our work to do—not just the work of a few interested folks every now and then, because we will miss things right, and we will tell incomplete stories. Knowing that this is incomplete does not make it less important. That doesn't mean we don't keep trying to tell more of a story.

**Donna Cox:** Thank you for the honor for being a part of this.

**Denise James:** Dr. Cox, thank you for being my colleague. It's great to share the work with you.

**Kathleen Henderson:** Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it. Like so many of us, I cannot believe I am soon approaching like 40 years of employment at the University of Dayton, I never ever intended to be here, as long as I have, but I'm thankful that I am and have had a chance to impact young lives, but also to have my life impacted. I'm also thankful that you all are capturing this. As I shared with Tom, I started working here when I was 23; I'm now 62, and I'm forgetting so much stuff. Get it on video because I'll probably say, "Was I there?" a few years from now.

**Herbert Woodward Martin:** Amen.

**Julius Amin:** When we began this process, we never knew where we were going. We never knew what we were going to find. This is one of the beauties of research. The fact that we are engaged in this conversation and that the conversation will continue after the entire symposium is done is clearly one of the objectives that the committee had. We can tell by this session that this conversation is not going to stop here.

### Comments from this session's chat

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*Note: This section contains the comments participants made in the Zoom chat field in response to the video and commentary.*

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**Tom Morgan** (questions posted in chat window at the beginning of the session): Where do we go from here? What do we need to do to preserve this kind history more effectively? What lessons have been learned that we need to remember, and how can this legacy be made more visible? What types of information should we look to include? This is an opportunity to collectively think of future directions for continued work on this project, and to think about ways to collect and preserve this information to make it a part of our institutional memory.

**Leslie Picca:** These are such incredible stories and perspectives to share and should be required viewing for ALL students, faculty, and staff (such as incorporated into the new faculty/staff orientation video).

**Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders:** That was excellent! Thanks to everyone for sharing these important perspectives and stories.

**Julius Amin:** I concur. The theme of providing one's self runs through these conversations; it is worth talking about.

**Kathleen Henderson:** I think that video would be great to share with Black alums. It might help them 1) to reconnect; and 2) to open up their foot lockers and share their contents with archives so that future students won't be as challenged when doing research.

**Donna Cox:** These stories are so important. We are a people of stories. Our stories bring a valuable perspective to the UD landscape that is easy to overlook, primarily because our voices are so few and because we often push back.

**Donna Cox:** Father Paul Marshall was my theology teacher. We did an independent study focusing on Black liberation theology!

**Jalen Turner:** I agree with Ms. Henderson. These stories are vital to UD Black history, and being able to record them now and share will be really important for future scholars and current UD students.

**Donna Cox:** We could do a book based on story.

**Jalen Turner:** I like that idea. I definitely would purchase and read from cover to cover.

**Deb Bickford:** Jalen, maybe you can author it!

**Jalen Turner:** I would love to be a part of that.

**Donna Cox:** Collecting, archiving, and sharing stories cannot be a one-and-done or every now and then; it needs to be ongoing and has to have a home and people for whom this is part of their work.

**Joel Pruce:** Yes.

**Shazia Rahman:** Agreed.

**Julius Amin:** Yes, yes.

**Kaitlin Hall:** I know a lot of students are interested in a mini UD history museum to walk through.

**Donna Cox:** Yes!

**Jalen Turner:** I was just thinking about a mini UD history course.

**Jana Bennett:** Love the mini UD history ideas.

**Jalen Turner:** I feel like that would be very important for incoming students to understand UD's history.

**Shazia Rahman:** Whatever we end up with, it should be accessible from the UD website, public-facing and so on.

**Jalen Turner:** Agreed, 100%.

**Julius Amin:** This is a crucial part of UD's story, and it needs to be ongoing and well-preserved. We need to keep stories of alums such Margaret Peters, etc.

**Ione Damasco:** Maybe a two-fold approach—something public-facing which is very important, but also placing the content in eCommons, the institutional repository, to be sure information is archived.

**Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders:** I agree, this needs to be part of the official UD history narrative. And it needs to live on somewhere where it can be updated.

**Sarah Cahalan:** Community archiving is a huge part of practice in libraries/archives/museums right now; keeping materials alive and engaging/building knowledge instead of hiding materials away for a select few to access; material culture as part of an ongoing conversation with the community. Resources are key! Even just preserving digital videos requires expertise and storage space.

**Joel Pruce:** And how do we do this without segmenting it off, as “only” Black history?

**Donna Cox:** Joel, that's part of the attitudinal/structural change needed, where people are consistently led to the understanding that the experiences of Black folk on campus IS UD history—to the point where this kind of leading is no longer necessary.

**Joel Pruce:** Absolutely, Dr. Cox!

**Jalen Turner:** I'm very thankful to be a part of this, and as a student, it's amazing to see so many influential Black people all on one screen sharing their stories. Thank you!

A cascade of thanks followed.

# **Symposium Conclusion: Gradualism Is No Longer Workable in the Anti-Black Racism Struggle**

*Julius A. Amin, Alumni Chair in Humanities*

Weeks before his death, Frederick Douglass was asked what message he had for the next generation of civil rights activists, and he replied: “Agitate! Agitate! Agitate!” Douglass devoted his life to human causes. Born into slavery, he escaped from it, paid for his freedom, and later became one of the most potent abolitionists and human rights activists of modern times. Racism, he argued, made a mockery of America’s political, economic, and social institutions, and he summoned the nation to “reform the national heart, quicken the national conscience, root out wicked prejudices ... and destroy the great moral evils.” His message shaped civil rights activism for many generations to come. Fittingly, his words are engraved on the University of Dayton Jesse Philips Humanities Building. The Symposium on Race was built on the tradition to agitate for change. It invited the campus community and beyond to close ranks and end this “mockery” on America’s identity. While the symposium lauded campus initiatives such as creating an anti-racism environment, it noted that colleges and universities have pursued the tactic of gradualism in the area of racial reform.

Though American colleges have wrestled with a variety of challenges at different times, the one constant problem has been anti-Black racism. It is a focus at the symposium. University of Dayton alumni articulated many challenges faced by Black students on campus. Representing different generations, speakers discussed their UD

experience, and irrespective of the decade in which they were students at the University, their descriptions of marginalization were strikingly similar. Currently enrolled Black students told similar stories to those discussed decades ago. Unable to fully integrate themselves into campuswide culture, Black students easily found solace in the multicultural office. Alumni spoke of feelings of loneliness, isolation, and marginalization on campus. Given that campus values are driven by institutional structures, as long as those structures remain unreformed, little will change. The administration must be bold, vigorous, and result-oriented in its anti-Black racism actions.

An additional and particularly significant issue that shaped the nature of the Symposium was COVID-19 and its adverse impact. Speakers at the Symposium spoke about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. America's 46th president, Joe Biden, vowed to bring change to communities of color. Repeatedly, he informed Black audiences of his gratitude to them, stating he would not forget the role Black voters played in his election as president. His selection of Amanda Gorman to deliver the inaugural poem set the tone. In her poem, "The Hill We Climb," Gorman challenged America to be bold as it seeks to create a just society for all. She summoned America to "compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man." In his inaugural address, Joe Biden affirmed his commitment to those basic things which define America: "Opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor and, yes, the truth." It was important for him to distance the American presidency from the policies of his predecessor. Biden's cabinet-level appointments affirmed the new directions. Representatives from different groups and races were appointed to cabinet-level positions. Again, it was in this context that the Symposium on Race took place.

The Symposium on Race challenged the University administration to do more to correct the racial imbalance. Speakers dwelled on the failure of the University to educate students on the history of anti-Black racism. It is a message that applied to many pre-University school districts in the country. History matters. Fittingly, keynote speaker Dr. Shannen Dee Williams noted that the time to relegate to footnotes the experiences of Black Catholics was over, adding "Black Catholic demands for reparation and justice also included the mandatory teaching of Black and



brown Catholic history in Catholic schools as well as in the nation's seminaries and women's religious formation programs." And institutions seemed ready to embrace the charge to educate the student body. In addition, the University has taken important steps to bring a change. Recently, Hathcock Hall, the newly renovated 58,000-square-foot computer science academic building on campus, was named in honor of Jessie S. Hathcock, an African American who graduated from the University of Dayton in 1930. The University Inclusive Excellence Council released a 2021 annual report, affirming that the crusade against anti-Black racism was an integral part of the drive to advance inclusive excellence for the common good at the University of Dayton and beyond. And so, it goes.

Finally, in an age when concepts such as "critical race theory" have been spun into a rallying point for opponents to the teaching of the history of anti-Black racism, the symposium proved that a particularly urgent aspect of the cure to racism is the reeducation of the student population on basic facts that shaped America's racial experience such as the three-fifths compromise, Jim Crow, the Dred Scott decision, Plessy vs. Ferguson, and so on. History is messy, but it serves as a rear-view mirror to understand the present and shape the future. It challenges students to begin to think differently. If UD's curriculum is reformed to seriously engage those basic issues and more, then the symposium will have achieved a part of its goal.



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