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

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Setting the Context

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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 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.

Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders

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 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.

Lawrence Burnley

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 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 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

Tom Morgan

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 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 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.[1] 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

Denise James

[1] 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—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

Joel Pruce

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.[2,3] 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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[2] 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/

[3] University of Dayton. "A Letter to W.E.B. Du Bois." October 13, 2020. 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,"[4] 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)

[4] 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

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,[5] 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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[5] “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

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.