African American Studies
2011-12 Annual Report

I. Narrative Description of the Status of the Discipline from a National Perspective (including emerging issues and trends)

African American Studies programs continue to be models of interdisciplinary education and scholarship at colleges and universities around the country. Recent economic conditions have led to budget cuts and eradication of entire programs. The College of Charleston stands out in its commitment to the program, demonstrated through the dedication of two faculty lines and its support of a major in African American Studies.

II. Program

a. Mission statement

The mission of the African American Studies Program at the College of Charleston is to promote academic excellence and social responsibility through the study of African American history and culture.

b. Program goals and their relationship to the College’s strategic plan

The College's Strategic Plan lists three Core Values: educational excellence, student-focused community, and the history, traditions, culture and environment of Charleston and the Lowcountry. The program in African American Studies is a natural outgrowth of these values. The College aims to promote educational excellence through the development of interdisciplinary educational opportunities. The African American Studies minor and eventual major will provide such an opportunity. The minor's (and eventual major's) opportunities for experiential learning are part of the AAST program's commitment to a student-focused community. Any consideration of the history, traditions, culture and environment of Charleston and the Lowcountry would be grossly incomplete without an examination of African American history and culture.

c. Strategies and tactics in the College’s strategic plan your department would place as highest priorities

We would prioritize:
Strategy 1, Tactics 1 & 2
Strategy 8, Tactics 1 & 2
d. Student Learning Outcomes of the program

1. Students will recognize and explain the major theoretical perspectives and key issues of debate in African American Studies.

2. Students will be able to identify major thinkers and intellectual movements in African American intellectual history.

3. Students will efficiently employ social science methodologies in the analysis of issues related to African Americans.

4. Students will be able to identify major writers and movements in the African American literary tradition.

5. Students will be able to identify major figures and events in African American history.

6. Students will demonstrate written competency in the analysis of African American history and culture.

7. Students will design and implement a research project that synthesizes knowledge gained in the major.

8. Students will engage constructively with the community.

III. Narrative Summary and Analysis of Departmental or Program Accomplishments

a. Please discuss any of the following that apply to your department or program over the last year, making reference to any data provided at http://ir.cofc.edu/aadeptdata/ or data that you supply in the Supporting Data section as appropriate. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Curricular offerings unusual for your discipline
  This year we offered the College's first study abroad experience to Barbados.

- Instructional contributions to other units, programs, and initiatives, including the Honors and First Year Experience programs, undergraduate and graduate programs outside your department, the REACH program, etc.
  FYSM 123: Contemporary Constructions of Black Womanhood, taught by Conseula Francis, counted for AAST and FYE credit. We also offered 3 courses in the SPECTRA program in Summer 2011 and 4 courses for SPECTRA in Summer 2012.

- Departmental or program contributions to interdisciplinarity, internationalization/globalization, personalized education and high impact student experiences (such as research and creative activities, civic engagement, study away, internships, peer education and service learning) during review year.
AAST is an interdisciplinary program that relies on 12 departments and programs for 39 courses.

- Summary of student and/or graduate accomplishments
  This year we graduated 10 minors, the largest graduating class in the programs history. One of our graduates, Kim Arnold, was accepted into one of the top Public Health graduate programs in the country, at Drexel University.

b. Please discuss the diversity among your faculty, including efforts made in recruitment to increase the presence of under-represented groups.
  Half of the 13 affiliate faculty in African American Studies are African or African American. Half are women. We are advertising our current position with the National Council of Black Studies and on various diversity websites and listservs.

c. Please provide a summary analysis of research and professional development productivity in your department, referring to the Supporting Data section as appropriate. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  The program is currently strong in English and history. We have added a faculty member to build strength in social science. We hope to hire a faculty member in the arts.

d. Please provide a summary of departmental service contributions to the school, College, community (of a professional nature), or profession. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  The program won a grant from the National Council of Black Studies to conduct a year-long African American history and culture book discussion series at the Dart branch of the public library.

e. Please provide a summary of new or continuing outreach activities in your department. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  Our book discussion series will continue until the end of this calendar year, with hopes to start another series in 2013. With the addition of a full-time faculty member, we hope to conduct more outreach activities in the community.

f. Has your department conducted professional development opportunities for faculty?
  With the assistance of the Provost's office we are sending two faculty members (the director and one other) the National Council of Black Studies conference.

g. What success have you had in meeting departmental, school or College goals? What obstacles prevent you from reaching specific departmental, school or College goals? In what way can Academic Affairs support your efforts?
  As the program grows, we find ourselves in desperate need of (1) space and (2) and increase in the operating budget to cover increasing costs in faculty development. Next academic year we will have two full-time faculty members and a director. The $5000 operating budget is insufficient to meet their needs.
h. What curricular development or other major changes in the program are planned for the next three years? Briefly, what resources are required to implement these?

We are proposing a new major and are planning to expand our study abroad/study away offerings. We hope to take students to Ghana, Paris, Washington, D.C. and Harlem. We will need an increase in our operating budget and permanent space to meet the needs of these developments.

Supporting Data
Faculty Productivity in and Support of Research and Professional Grants

- Received from External Sources

  We received a $6000 grant from the National Council of Black Studies