Index and Introduction to

The Microfilmed

African-American Studies Department, Buffalo State College, Records and Papers

(three rolls)

Part of

The Buffalo Afro-American Collection
A joint project of
The Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier Inc.
and
Buffalo State College

And

*The Buffalo State College Regional History Collection

Copies of the microfilmed titles are housed at
The North Jefferson Branch Library
*The Buffalo State College Archives and
*The Monroe Fordham Regional History Center, Buffalo State College

The 16MM film was filmed with a 34X lens
African-American Studies at Buffalo State College: A Brief History

In a program review of the "African and Afro-American Studies" (AAS) program prepared in 1980, Professor Keith Baird (Program Advisor) presented a brief history of the AAS Program on the Buffalo State College campus. Baird reported that the AAS unit, "which originated...in 1969, grew to a program in 1970...developed into a department in 1972, and was reduced again to a program in 1977."

Prior to the formation of the AAS Program in 1970, a number of courses which focused on Africa, Afro-Americans, or race relations were offered through "traditional" departments. Those courses were grouped together to form "a major portion" of the offerings of the initial AAS Program. In 1970 the proposal for a degree program in Afro-American Studies was submitted. That proposal included the "traditional" courses, plus at least half-a-dozen courses that were to be offered by an Afro-American Studies department. The Bachelor of Science degree in Afro-American Studies was eventually approved by the college and SUNY Central.

The African-American Studies Program owes its origin, in part, to the establishment of the E.O.P. (SEEK Program) at Buffalo State and the accompanying dramatic increase in the number of Afro-American students enrolled at the college. The AAS program was originally housed in the Faculty of Developmental Studies. The AAS department was listed in the college catalog for the first time in 1971-72. At that time, the department’s faculty consisted of a coordinator and three other faculty members. The catalog also listed eleven courses under the department’s jurisdiction. By the 1975-76 academic year, the department’s full-time faculty had increased to six persons, and the number of courses had increased to thirty. That was the department’s peak year, from there things went downhill.

In 1976 and 1977, the department lost a total of four faculty members (2 non-renewals and 2 resignations). The department was not allowed to replace any of the losses. In addition, as a result of a general reorganization which the college implemented in 1977, the AAS Department was dissolved and the remaining department members were transferred to "traditional" departments. Following the reorganization, AAS was listed in the college catalog as an interdisciplinary-degree granting program. The degree program was housed in the department of Anthropology.

In 1981, the college placed the B.S. Degree in Afro-American Studies in the inactive category. In that same year the college approved an interdisciplinary minor in African-American Studies. The year 1981 also witnessed the establishment of the African and African-American Studies Interdisciplinary Unit. (The college began encouraging the formation of interdisciplinary units as a way of getting departments to work together in developing course sequences in subject areas—(a Women Studies Unit was also formed).

From 1977 (the year the AAS Unit was dissolved) to the present (fall 1988), all of the courses offered as part of the AAS program have been offered through “traditional” departments.

Currently, the AAS Interdisciplinary Unit is composed of seven faculty members and two administers. The seven faculty members have all offered courses that are included in the
program. There are also several faculty members who offer AAS courses but declined to be members of the Interdisciplinary Unit.

*Monroe Fordham, 1988*

The files of the African American Studies department became dormant after the department was dissolved (1977). The papers that are microfilmed in this collection are primarily from the 1970s. After the department was dissolved and African American Studies became a "program", records were kept by the coordinator of that program. Professor Keith Baird. Records from the "program" period are not included in this collection.

In 1988, Monroe Fordham was asked to serve as Acting Coordinator of African American Studies. In 1989 Dr. Anthony Neal was appointed as Coordinator of African American Studies. Records and papers from the period, 1988-1991 are filmed as part of "Drawer #10".

In 1991 Dr. Simeon Chilungu informed the "African American Studies Unit" that the dormant records of the former AAS Department were about to be discarded. The "Unit" asked Monroe Fordham to preserve the records on microfilm. There were 10 file drawers of papers in the collection. The papers were filmed by drawers.

The work of indexing, and filming the collection was done by several students from Fordham’s African American history courses. The collection was indexed and prepared for filming by Tiffany Coke and Sharon Stroman. The microfilming was done by Coke, Stephanie Dilbert, and Renee Joslyn. The project was done during the 1991-1992 academic year.
Index to Contents of Microfilm

There were 10 file drawers of papers. The papers were filmed by file drawer. A general description of the contents of each drawer follows.

DRAWER # 1

Course descriptions of each AAS course, requirements for majors.

DRAWER # 2

Student Programs, faculty folders, student folders for active and inactive students (all organized alphabetically).

DRAWER # 3

General files.

DRAWER # 4


DRAWER # 5


DRAWER # 6

AAS department status and pertinent information, 1969-1976, etc.

DRAWER # 7

General files. Subject files organized alphabetically.

DRAWER # 8

General subject files, correspondence.

DRAWER # 9

Files related to department business, committee minutes, department meetings, etc.

DRAWER # 10

Contains two folders of papers covering the period 1988-1991.