

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

# IDEI in Our Community

FEBRUARY 2022 - ISSUE NO.8

## A Word with Jacqueline Peterson

JACQUELINE PETERSON, IDEI ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT

The Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is delighted to share with you the Winter issue of "IDEI In Our Community".

In September, my family and I made our second journey to the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. My first trip there was in 2016, the year that the doors first opened. I returned because it was impossible to see and take in all that was there in just one visit. This trip was very different because there were restrictions on the number of visitors allowed in the facility, and everyone had to be masked. Nonetheless, it was both emotional and jubilant to journey from floor to floor, seeing hundreds of years of history of people who look like me, and to read their amazing stories of troubles and triumphs. However, it also saddened me to think about the fact that only recently were hundreds of years of the stories and truths of Blacks and African Americans unveiled to educate all.

The contributions of Black and African Americans were primarily unacknowledged, forgotten, and omitted until 1915. At that time Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard historian, and Minister, Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Its purpose was to bring awareness about African Americans who had made significant contributions to society. These are the people for so long who had been the unsung heroes in American history.

## IDEI Updates

[2021-2022 MINI GRANT UPDATES](#)

CONGRATULATIONS TO STEPHANIE PATRICONE AND KENDRA MARASCO! TO SEE ALL OTHER MINI GRANTS THAT HAVE BEEN AWARDED VISIT OUR [WEBSITE!](#)



INSTITUTIONAL  
DIVERSITY  
EQUITY &  
INCLUSION

Happy  
**Black History**  
**Month**  
from the  
IDEI Team!

# A Letter of Welcome (Continued)

JACQUELINE PETERSON, IDEI ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT

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Carter G. Woodson created Negro History Week in 1926 as a seven-day commemoration. The month of February was chosen in honor of the birthdays of Fredrick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. Negro History Month became Black History Month in 1976 when officially recognized by President Gerald Ford. In a statement of proclamation, President Ford called upon the nation to **“seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”**

As we are approaching Women’s History Month, this issue of “IDEI In Our Community”, highlights Black women who have made contributions to black and women’s histories. In celebration of 50 Years of Women at Providence College, this issue also highlights that milestone.

For generations, Black women have been strong forces in families and communities. Their contributions have been immeasurable as activists, educators and scholars, writers, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, and more. One notable influencer whose contributions to black and women’s history will be forever lasting is belle hooks (Ms. hooks intentionally and preferably spelled her name with lowercase letters), who passed recently. She was an activist, scholar, and prolific writer whose work focused on bringing to light the lives and experiences of black women.

Finally, I would like to call upon the Friar community to say a prayer for the historically Black Colleges and Universities that have recently been the targets of violent threats. Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are proud institutions of higher learning that have been a beacon in Black history.

I believe that you will find this issue of “IDEI In Our Community” interesting and informative.

Enjoy!

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# A Conversation with Wanda Ingram

DR. WANDA INGRAM '75, '19P

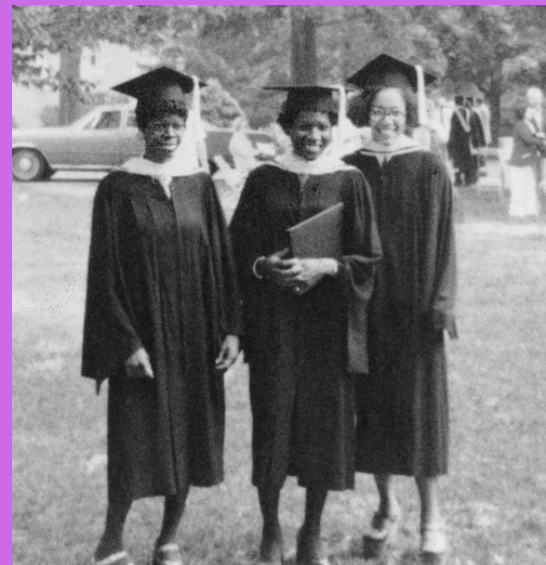
Dr. Ingram, a Class of 1975 graduate, has worked at PC for more than 30 years, assisting students as Senior Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Her history on campus started in 1971 as a member of the first class of women to enroll at the college. Her commitment to leadership, student success, diversity and inclusion has made her an inspiration to many.

As one of the first African American female students to graduate from PC, Dr. Ingram remembers enduring many challenges during her time on campus, which led to her and her classmates becoming a “family.” To maintain in touch with her classmates, Dr. Ingram explains how a group called *PC Black* was formed, and regular unofficial reunions were hosted. PC Black welcomes all alumni of color!

Dr. Ingram has been present for many of the changes to campus; however, one change that she has celebrated the most has been the increased number of multicultural students who attend PC. She states, “I am so happy and proud of the number of students of color that are on the campus, and I can watch the diversity that is going on around me because there is so much more.” Dr. Ingram’s work for the past years with the MLK Convocation Committee has crystallized the importance of always striving for a beloved community and how there is still a lot of work to be done when it comes to belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As we enter the next 50 years of women at PC, she echoed the importance of looking out for one another, remembering who you are and where you came from, and taking a stance when necessary. As “It is not just one person’s problem, it’s everyone’s issue, and it’s everyone’s problem... just be a part of the growth and development.”

Dr. Ingram shared that meeting Dr. Bernice King five years ago, spending time with her, and having a great conversation at dinner will forever be one of her favorite memories.



**Dean Ingram & friends, at  
commencement in 1975**

# Our Vision for Beloved Community

MLK CONVOCAATION 2022

## Horton Sears '13

Assistant Director of Training and Student Development

"Dr. Bernice King's address further affirmed my vision of a beloved community. This vision includes growth, accountability, and understanding in a community where:

- our diversity brings opportunity for connection and celebration rather than division;
- where the perspective of the majority learns to live through the lenses of empathy; and
- where the voices and experiences of the marginalized are amplified.

Dr. King spoke about our society existing within an 'Age of Awakening' where 'learning and education is key to being a beloved community.' I envision my work within Student Affairs working within the collaborative effort at PC to walk in community towards embodying inclusion. I also envision accessing spaces that guide us to better learn about ourselves, challenge our bias, and encourage courageous dialogue, a necessary part of our human development."



## Dr. Eva Michelle Wheeler

Associate Professor of Foreign Language Studies & Black Studies

### "Daughters of the Movement"

"As I contemplate the question of what a Beloved Community would look like at PC, my mind turns to Dr. Bernice King's call to "courageous conversations and dialogues". "A lot of people don't know enough about other cultures," she said. "They don't know the truth about racial disparities," and, on this issue, education is crucial. It is the type of education for which student activists, in the tradition of Dr. King, protested on our campus in 2015. They asked then, as many campus community members ask now, for a more inclusive curriculum, for culturally competent faculty with diverse expertise and world views, and for changes to the campus culture to ensure that all members of the Friar family feel welcome, represented, and valued. Although, in the seven years since those protests, we have made progress toward the ideal of a Beloved Community, Professor Ilyasah Shabazz reminded us of the words of Coretta Scott King, "Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it in every generation."

As we have these courageous conversations about what equity would look like on our campus, we are called to develop a true understanding of our different cultures and experiences. On this point, Dr. King quoted her father's words, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." Professor Shabazz encouraged us to take heart in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Dr. Bernice King added, "And we help to bend that arc." On our campus, and in our communities, we must strive to bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice."

## Santiago Najarro Cano '24

"I think that Dr. Bernice King's address resonated with my vision of Providence College because it mentioned education through unity. As the Providence College community, we are here to learn through our lens and through the lenses of others around us and appreciate differences with open generosity and care. We are at this institution because we are seeking higher education, and as a Beloved Community, "We should not be put against ourselves rather, we are brothers, not enemies" (Dr. Bernice King). We are a community of learners, educators, students, and faculty here at Providence College to learn through the textbook and learn and grow together as a community. As we strive for stronger diversity, equity, and inclusion at PC, my love for education and consistently learning will be at the forefront of the vision of the Beloved Community at Providence College. "



# Celebrate Black History

Black History Gallery | All month  
Displayed in the windows of Moore Hall 120

MLK Be the Change | 12:00 p.m. | Tuesday, Feb 15.  
McPhail's, Slavin Center

Letter from a Birmingham Jail Lecture Series | 12:00 p.m | Tuesday, Feb. 15  
Zoom

MLK Vision Award & Reception | 3:30 p.m. | Wednesday, Feb. 16  
Bouligny Lounge

MLK Vigil | 6:00 p.m. | Wednesday, Feb. 16  
St. Dominic Chapel

Converging Crises and Legacy On Neglect: Medical Racism, Disproportionate Poverty,  
and Covid Disparities | 6:00 p.m | Tuesday, Feb. 17 | Zoom

90s Party | 10 p.m | Saturday, Feb. 19  
Hosted by Women Empowered | Moore Lounge 125

Letter from a Birmingham Jail Lecture Series | 12:00 p.m | Tuesday, Feb. 22  
Zoom

Movement Language Series featuring Kelvin Fabian | 7 p.m | Wednesday, Feb. 23  
Hosted by Moore Hall | Moore 122 Arts Café

Black Expo | 6 p.m | Friday, Feb 25  
Hosted by Afro-AM | Moore 120, Moore 125 Lounge, Moore Lobby

Black History Month Food Truck | 7-9 p.m. | Friday, Feb. 25  
Ruane/ Concannon Patio

Motherland Dance Practice | 8 p.m | Mondays & Thursdays  
Motherland Dance Group | Moore Dance Studio

BIG EAST Honors Black Fives Era with 22 Games Across Entire Conference  
BIG EAST Conference joins forces with Black Fives Foundation for a first of its kind initiative to  
honor pre-NBA history of African Americans in Basketball

Visit the D.I.D WALL at Moore Hall!

AND MORE...



# Winter Anti-Racism Lecture Series

As we approach Black History Month and Providence College's celebration of the MLK Convocation, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion invites you to two learning opportunities to grow as anti-racist members of a Beloved Community through our Winter Anti-Racism Series. To learn more about these offerings, visit our website.

In collaboration with Providence Black Study Syllabus, join us for a three-part workshop on Dr. King's prophetic and powerful Letter from a Birmingham Jail facilitated by Marco A. McWilliams. This is a chance to do a deeper dive into Dr. King's written works (one that is particularly salient for the current racial climate in the US today) and an opportunity to recommit to daily challenging racism in your spheres of influence.

These three progressive "lunch and learn" style workshops will all take place virtually and while we would love your participation in all three, you can register for individual sessions as your schedule allows.

Register [here](#) for February 15th, 12-1PM | Register [here](#) for February 22nd, 12-1PM

## PC ANTI-RACISM LECTURE SERIES

SPONSORED BY THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



### LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL 3-WEEK INTENSIVE

TUESDAY, JAN. 25TH, 12-1PM  
TUESDAY, FEB 15TH, 12-1PM  
TUESDAY, FEB 22ND, 12-1PM  
[REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK](#)

#### MARCO A. MCWILLIAMS BLACK STUDIES SCHOLAR

MARCO A. MCWILLIAMS IS A BLACK STUDIES SCHOLAR, COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, EDUCATOR AND RESEARCH CONSULTANT. HE IS A PUBLISHED WRITER WITH NEARLY TWO DECADES OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP WORK IN CONVENING DIVERSE LEARNING COMMUNITIES. MCWILLIAMS WAS THE FOUNDING INSTRUCTOR OF THE INFLUENTIAL BLACK STUDIES PROGRAM AT DARE (DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY) WHERE HIS TEACHING FOCUSED ON USING THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE TO DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

## PC ANTI-RACISM LECTURE SERIES



### CONVERGING CRISES AND LEGACY OF NEGLECT: MEDICAL RACISM, DISPROPORTIONATE POVERTY, AND COVID DISPARITIES

THURSDAY, FEB. 17TH, 5-6PM  
[REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK](#)

#### DR. AISHAH SCOTT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DR. AISHAH SCOTT, JOINT APPOINTED TO OUR BLACK STUDIES PROGRAM AND HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, DELIVERS A LECTURE ABOUT THE WAYS THE MEDICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX NEGLECTS AND MISAPPLIES CARE TO BLACK AND BROWN BODIES, ESPECIALLY SEEN IN DISPARITIES EMERGING DURING THE ONGOING COVID 19 PANDEMIC.

We are honored to welcome our very own Dr. Aishah Scott, joint appointed to our Black Studies program and Health Policy and Management department to deliver a lecture on the ways the medical-industrial complex neglects and misapplies care to Black and Brown bodies, especially seen in disparities emerging through the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

Register [here](#) for the webinar with Dr. Scott on February 17th, 5-6PM EST.

We look forward to having you join us!  
Any questions can be directed to [diversity@providence.edu](mailto:diversity@providence.edu)

# Women in the Civil Rights Movement

A SHOWCASE OF WOMEN'S CHAMPIONED DEI EFFORTS

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## Coretta Scott King

She carried the message of nonviolence and the dream of the Beloved Community. Mrs. King founded the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in 1968; the center serves as a living memorial for her husband's legacy. In 1962, she served as a Women's Strike for Peace delegate to the 17-nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. Together with more than 800 civil and human rights organizations, she formed the Coalition of Conscience. Scott King's career as a civil rights activist spanned almost 40 years after her husband's death.

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## Diane Nash

She led the Nashville Sit-in Movement, which preceded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's founding, and coordinated the Birmingham, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi Freedom Ride. Her tactical and unwavering support of the Freedom Riders was critical to their success throughout the South. In 1962, Martin Luther King, Jr., nominated her for an award from the NAACP's New York branch, acknowledging her as the "driving spirit in the nonviolent assault on segregation at lunch counters."

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## Gloria Richardson

Named "the Lady General of Civil Rights" by Ebony magazine, Richardson led successful protests as head of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee. Her stance on questioning nonviolence as a tactic inspired later efforts of the Black Panthers and others who adopted more militant responses to social justice. She later moved to New York City and worked in human services. She supported the youth of the Black Lives Matter movement.



## **Mamie Till- Mobley**

Till was an American educator and activist. Her son's death, Emmett Till, became the catalyst for her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. She formed The Emmett Till Players- a group that worked with school children who performed famous civil rights leaders' speeches. Till is recognized for turning her tragedy into a national movement; she became a crusader for justice for her son and others.



## **Kathleen Cleaver**

She was the first woman to serve on the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party, where she developed communications strategies and outreach to the media. Cleaver returned to the United States in 1973 after being exiled for four years and created the Revolutionary People's Communication Network. She later graduated from Yale University and went on to Yale Law School, graduating in 1989 becoming a law professor shortly after.



## **Aileen Clarke Hernandez**

Hernandez was a Black union organizer, civil rights, and women's rights activist. She served as the only woman in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1964. Years later, she served as the second president of the National Organization for Women and led the Women's Strike for Equality in 1970. She was known as a political organizer and urban consultant.



# Creating a Beloved Community: Start from Within

SOKEO ROS, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER @ MOORE HALL

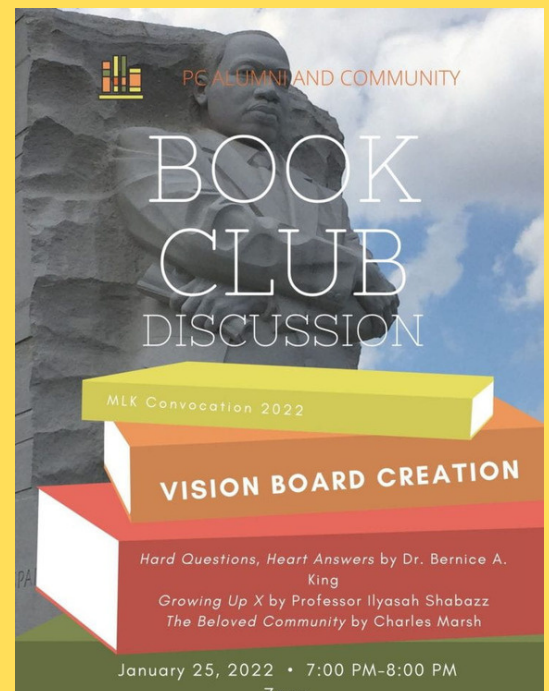
In collaboration with Stephanie Mireku, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations of Institutional Advancement and Sokeo Ros, Director of the Center @ Moore Hall, the Providence College Alumni Book Club held an event that was a twist on the traditional book discussion format and was facilitated by Director of Moore Hall, Sokeo Ros. The event was an opportunity to engage in dialogue and learn how to make a personal impact in your own community.

During the special evening, we reflected on the messages of our MLK Convocation speakers, Dr. Bernice A. King and Professor Ilyasah Shabazz, and how their work and conversation was related to the suggested readings below (with specific quotes from all three books). The participants spoke on such themes as change, social justice, the beloved community, and our impacts on youth. Some of the quotes that were applied to the conversation were:

1. "Our youth are smart. They listen to what we say, they watch what we do, and sometimes what we do speak so loud that they cannot hear what we say... The problem is we underestimate most of our children." (King, p.19)
2. "My mother was conscious of our security, but she was not paranoid and she did not raise us to be that way... She taught us not fear and suspicion but optimism. Look for the good and praise it." (Shabazz, p. 109) (protection and safe community)
3. "I grew up in an unjust system... And yet we are all in trouble now because of it. So the key thing is how do we get out of it? It takes all of us working together..." (Marsh, p. 192)

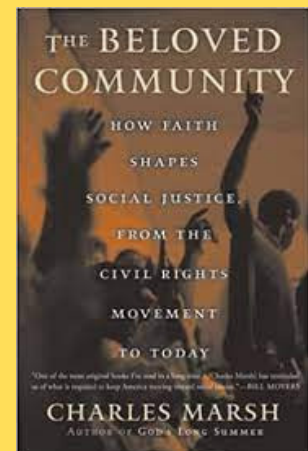
The conversation led to their own experiences off and on the Providence College campus. One participant spoke of their experiences while volunteering in the Peace Corp. Another spoke of social justice movements in relation to youth voice and others also spoke about institutional change and examination leading to action steps.

This exchange of ideas resulted in the final part of the event which was the verbal Vision Board of a beloved community. They all had an opportunity to add in what they believed was needed to cultivate a beloved and inclusive community. Many spoke about the importance of love, empathy, understanding and acceptance regarding the authenticity of self and each other. But they also expressed the need of resources and access to affordable healthy food, adequate housing/homes, living conditions, equitable and relevant education systems, and the importance of youth voice. Needless to say, this special night was a profound discussion on what it means, and what it takes, to become a beloved community.



## Recommended readings for this session:

Hard Questions, Heart Answers by  
Dr. Bernice A. King  
Growing Up X by Professor Ilyasah  
Shabazz  
The Beloved Community by  
Charles Marsh



# Anna J. Cooper & Liberating Truth

FR. JUSTIN BOLGER, CHAPLAIN AND DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

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Washington, D.C. is a great walking city. I spent 7 years there as a friar in formation at the Dominican House of Studies in the Brookland neighborhood before being ordained to the priesthood and assigned to Providence College. On one of my jaunts, I found myself in an old part of the city called Le Droit Park. I came across one of those historical signs (you know, the kind you usually just walk by). This time I decided to read it. I was introduced to Anna J. Cooper and was very pleased with the introduction. Cooper (1858-1964) was a black woman, scholar, educator, author, wife, and mother. Her story is incredible. Having been born a slave she became a great scholar and educator, receiving degrees from elite institutions like the Sorbonne in Paris. According to the sign in that D.C. park—Anna J. Cooper Circle to be exact—Cooper was a stalwart defender of the liberal arts.

In Cooper's time, a debate centered on whether education should emphasize the vocational arts over the liberal. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois famously debated this point. Across the pond, John Henry Newman also addressed this disputed pedagogical question in his book, *Idea of a University*—a highly influential text for Catholic higher education. A central question in this debate (albeit simplistically put) concerns the purpose of higher education: "Is higher education about learning a profession or being set free through a liberal education?" Following from this question is another, "If learning a profession is the way towards a steady job and financial stability, and if this is what makes for a good life, then does that render a liberal arts education unhelpful and obsolete?"

Cooper's own answer to that last question was a resounding "no." A person and society can only find the good life through deep engagement with big questions. Cooper would agree, I think, with Dubois who said, "The true college will ever have but one goal—not to earn meat, but to know the end and aim of that life which meat nourishes." From her unique vantage point as a black woman who had been born into slavery with all the disadvantages that come with it, Cooper championed the classic liberal arts as the way to liberate the soul. Indeed, this is the original sense of liberal education, which comes from the Latin words *educare* and *libertas*, which literally means to lead into freedom.

As we celebrate Black History Month and 50 years of women at Providence College, Cooper's wisdom seems to me a profound source of liberation. Her own work suggests this as she educated orphans, women, the working class, and the educated class. Undoubtedly she knew what freedom meant through her life and studies, and she worked to make known the truth that sets us free. She was a great defender of engaging truth in the classroom, writing, "Education, then, is the safest and richest investment possible to man."

Veritas, the motto of the Dominican Order and Providence College, has the ability to liberate all who seek it. Our college offers a place for all to pursue, receive, and teach truth. Our robust core curriculum reflects this, allowing students to engage Western Civilization, philosophy, and theology. We also provide great professional training, of course, but it is in the core program where students probe big questions: What is true happiness? What should I pursue in my life? What makes for true friendship? How are faith and reason compatible?

We ask these questions (and many more) here at Providence. To engage them, we read the great thinkers of history, discuss and argue their answers, and we see how their thoughts apply to our own lives. In doing this intellectual work, we seek to know the aim of life. Cooper knew that entering into this perennial discussion within a classic education leads to a great freedom of the soul—a freedom you can enjoy and pursue even if you suffer from serious

disadvantages as she did. Indeed, it's key to study precisely if one suffers from such disadvantages. Moreover, Cooper knew that everyone from all walks of life can be enlightened and freed through a deep engagement with truth.

It was a providential moment that day I walked through Anna J. Cooper Circle. I'm grateful to learn her story, which I find incredibly inspiring. Her voice and ideas about education live on today in places like Providence College. I hope we continue to listen to and engage with great voices of the liberal arts tradition—voices like Cooper's—to prepare us for true freedom today.



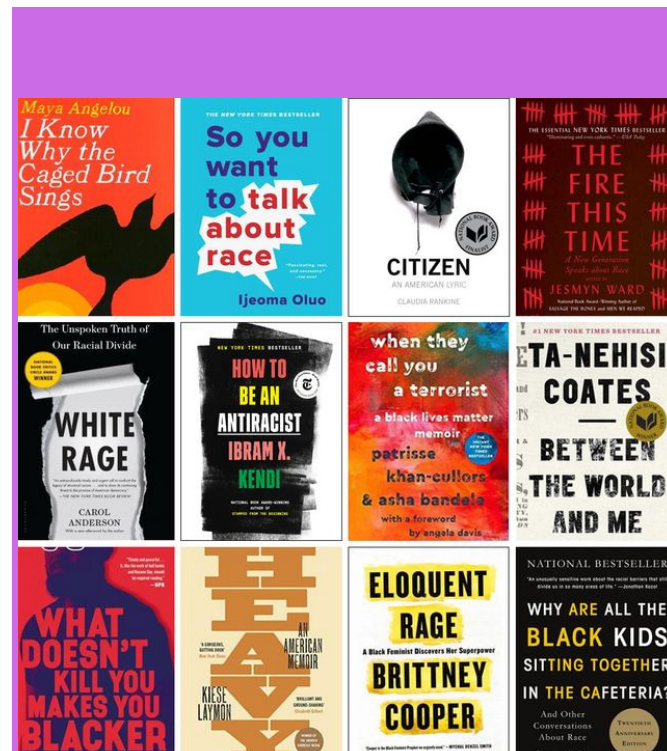


# A Reflection on Black History Month

DR. SAAID MENDOZA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY,  
IDEI FACULTY-IN-RESIDENCE

When I reflect on Black History Month, I think about the importance of recognizing that Black History *is* American History. The success of this nation has heavily depended on exploited Black labor, cultural influences, and intellectual contributions that simply cannot be overlooked.

As an educator, I strive to decolonize course content to help students remember that history is written by those who have power and privilege. When we give others voice, we are able to gain better insight into our biased interpretation of the past. For example, students in my Stereotypes & Prejudice seminar read Ibram X. Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist" and watch the 13th documentary by Ava Duvernay. These critical pieces have led to important conversations about the social psychology of racism, which lead to a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of the Black lived experience today.



Suggested Readings  
on Anti-Racism

Created by:  
Perla Castillo Calderon '20, '22G