AADS introduces new Program Specialist, Richard Paul

By Nathaniel Tolbert
If there is one constant in life, it is change. Every year brings about a new set of changes and this fall sweeping winds bring a new face to the African and African Diaspora Studies Program. Gone is the wonderful Cat McAteer who provided the office with a warm and caring presence during her six-year tenure at the office. In her place is Richard Paul, the new Program Specialist. Mr. Paul brings the same warm and caring attitude that Ms. McAteer provided as well as an intense passion for diaspora studies and an extensive knowledge of Boston College.

A double eagle, with a B.S. in Environmental Geoscience (’07) and a M.S. in Administration (’10), Mr. Paul knows his way around Boston College and boasts an impressive list of accomplishments. Richard Paul has been a McNair Research Scholar, a Fulbright-Hayes recipient, a Resident Assistant for three years, a former president of Graduate AHANA, held a graduate position at the Learning to Learn office, served as both a tutor and full time staff member at the Learning Resources for Student Athletes program, and was both a member and moderator of the Dedicated Intellectuals of the People (DIOP), a men’s group on campus. The list of Mr. Paul’s Boston College involvement can go on forever. Richard Paul’s experiences at AADS have also come full circle. Richard began working for the program as a student worker during the 2004-2005 academic year; he became an AADS minor in 2005 and returned to the program as a graduate assistant in 2009. Needless to say, Richard Paul knows a little bit about Boston College and the importance of AADS as a presence on campus. Voices hopes that this interview allows readers to get to know the man we affectionately refer to as Mr. BC on a deeper level.

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The 2011-2012 Works in Progress Lecture Series

By Steven Jefferson
For the past six years, the African and African Diaspora Studies Program has put on Works in Progress Series. The lecture series allows prominent scholars and faculty in the field to present their work to the Boston College community. This year, Works in Progress is pleased and delighted to welcome Njelle Hamilton and Gina Pugliese from Brandeis University, Spschel Walker from the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Boston College’s own Peace Medici topics include Oral Culture and Print Culture, Literary Contemporary Aesthetics, Slave Life, Beauty and Blackness. All Works in Progress events will take place in Lyons Hall 301 from 12-1p and FREE lunch is always provided. For more information on the Works in Progress in African Diaspora Studies, please visit our website at www.bc.edu/aads or email Richard Paul at Richard.paul@bc.edu
Introduces Richard Paul  continued from page 1

What are your goals for the program during your tenure as program specialist?
In light of recent staff changes in AADS, my first goal is to bring some stability to the program by my mere educational background, and familiarity and past employment with the African and African Diaspora Studies Program.

My second goal is to assist Dr. Rhonda Frederick in growing the minor. I hope to attract more active students in the BC community. If this means that I have to be outside [laughs] of the office showcasing the minor to students then yes, if it means that [AADS] must find clever ways to better advertise the minor and improve enrollment, yes.

How do you believe your experience at Boston College helps you in accomplishing your goals? You’re almost like Mr. BC, you’ve been in a lot of different programs you’ve been a recipient of awards you’ve been an RA, does that help you with this position?
I possess a very strong, work ethic. I take what I do seriously, I don’t play, I get the job done. First and foremost, I have a vested interest in this program being a past AADS minor and then graduate assistant in the office during both my undergraduate and graduate career. Secondly, I have conducted several research projects on the African diaspora. The aforementioned has prepared me to become an asset to the AADS program. I need to reiterate that my position as Program Specialist is not restricted to administrative duties. If I were only doing administrative duties then that means that there is no manager and everything falls on the shoulders of the director, so that takes away from him/her directing the program. My past employment and positions of leadership have given me the experience and skillset to accomplish my goals for AADS. For instance, my previous employment as an Academic Counselor in the Office of Learning Resources for Student-Athletes, not only did I advise students but I also performed liaison services between faculty, administrators, staff, coaches and student-athletes. During my tenure as President of Graduate AHANA, I created, planned and executed programs that fostered community and connected students with BC faculty, and staff. Those skills mentioned will enable me to assist Dr. Rhonda Frederick in growing the AADS minor into a major.

Outside of your academic and scholarly experiences what strengths do you bring to the job personally? You already mentioned hard work.
Besides hard work, I am Caribbean American. I was born in Trinidad to a working poor family. I am forever thankful to my mother and father who instilled in me from a kid that doing well academically was a means to upward socio-economic mobility. So personally I bring the drive for professional development and to succeed in whatever I do. Thus it is my immigrant experience I bring to AADS.

So would you say you bring a relate-ability to a sector of students on this campus?
In terms of relate-ability, I could easily identify with the Caribbean population at Boston College. Also, I am a first generation college student. I am the first in my immediate family to go to college and also attain a Master’s degree. I do share the above experiences with many AHANA students at Boston College.

What is the Boston College community’s weakest point and how do you think that AADS can help strengthen that area?
Boston College is a great place to be. It offers an array of opportunities and for some reason people just fall in love with BC and find themselves here. I have a unique perspective of being an undergraduate, graduate student and now employee. I think that Boston College really needs to do a better job with diversity. I know its cliché that people say that, but it really needs to do a better job. You hear a lot about diversity regarding the undergraduate population, but what about diversity in terms of employees at Boston College? You do not hear about that of course. How many people in the past year...of the few black employees that are hired, how many have left in this past year for various reasons? How many people know that? And what is Boston College doing about that? Fostering diversity should be a Boston College Administration led initiative.

The last question is what do you hope to learn during your tenure as Program Specialist?
[Laughs] That’s a tough one, that’s a loaded question. From an organizational point of view, I think it would be good to learn more about where AADS fit in the university organizational structure....

Read the rest of this interview at bc.edu/aads
Word Around the Community

Each month Voices will include articles of note pertaining to the African and African Diaspora. Feel Free to submit articles that pique your interest to aads@bc.edu

Pitts: The black self-loathing of Herman Cain
His trivializing of their struggle is an insult to African-Americans
By Leonard Pitts Jr.

This is for those who keep asking what I think of Herman Cain. In particular, it’s for those who want to know what the tea party's embrace of this black businessman turned presidential candidate says about my claim that the tea party is racist.

I might eat the plate of crow those folks proffer if I’d ever actually made that claim. What I have said, fairly consistently, is something more nuanced: Racial animus is an element of tea party ideology, but not its entirety. As I once noted in this space, the tea party probably would not exist if Condoleezza Rice were president.

Modern social conservatives, in my experience, do not hate black people en masse. To the contrary, there are two kinds of blacks they love. The first is those, like Ms. Rice, who are mainly mute on the subject of race, seldom so impolite as to say or do anything that might remind people they are black. The second is those who will engage on race, but only to lecture other blacks for their failures as conservatives conceive them. And that, friends and neighbors, is Herman Cain all over.

Read the rest of this article at baltimoresun.com

Will Smith, Jada Pinkett Smith buy minority ownership in Philadelphia 76ers NBA basketball team
By Nina Mandell

Will Smith and wife Jada Pinkett Smith bought a minority stake in the Philadelphia 76ers.

Will Smith just bought a much bigger playground to spend most of his days.

The Philadelphia native and wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, are officially minority shareholders of the 76ers NBA team in a deal that was confirmed by the league on Tuesday. The "Men In Black" star and his wife are part of an ownership group that includes a former NBA executive…

Read the rest of this article at NYdailynews.com

Culture on Campus

Boston College has a rich tradition of culture clubs pertaining to the Diaspora. Culture on Campus' goal is to make students aware of said club's events. This month's profiles the AADS Works in Progress Series

2011-2012 Works in Progress Lecture Series Schedule*

“The Impact of Decentralization Reform on Local Government Accountability in Ethiopia: A District Level Comparative Analysis”
Wed, November 16, 2011
Aberra Tesfay
Boston College

“Yardie to the Core: Reggae (Trans)Nationalism in Colin Channer’s Waiting in Vain”
Wed, November 30, 2011
Njelle Hamilton
Brandeis University

“Thur, February 9, 2012
Speshal Walker
UMass, Boston
Doctoral Candidate, Psychology

Wed, February 22, 2012
Peace Medie
Boston College
Doctoral Candidate, Public and International Affairs

Thur, March 1, 2012
Gina Puliese
Brandeis University
Doctoral Candidate, English
Introducing AADS Dissertation Fellow Peace Medie

Peace A. Medie is a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned a B.A. in Geography and Resource Development from the University of Ghana and an M.A. in International Affairs from Ohio University. Her dissertation “Police Behavior in Post-Conflict States: Explaining Variation in Responses to Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking and Rape” studies the factors that lead police officers in Liberia to forward some violent crimes against women to court but allow others to be resolved in the private sphere. It investigates the influence that international and local nongovernmental organizations have on law enforcement. The American Association of University Women, the International Federation of University Women, and the American Political Science Association have supported this research. During her year at Boston College, Peace will complete her dissertation and begin to revise it for publication. In the spring of 2012 Peace will teach a course entitled “Gender and In(Security) in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings”

Musings from the Diaspora

Each month, “Voices” will pick a topic of interest relevant to the Africans in the Diaspora and submitted by its readers. The goal of these editorials is to promote dialogue; after each editorial, readers are encouraged to submit written replies. Respondents may respectfully agree or disagree, but always remember that the goal is dialogue. The opinions expressed are exclusively those of the writer.

The Effects of Change
By Nathaniel Tolbert

In the October/November Issue of Vibe magazine, multi platinum rapper Lil Wayne made some interesting remarks regarding the Tea Party Movement and the treatment of President Barack Obama. Regarding the Tea Party: “You learn from what the right-wing is doing and you take something from it… I feel like as (black) people the most that we can do is better ourselves and learn. Then look at yourself and ask ‘Am I the person they’re talking about or am I not?’ You have to make the most of who you are because the Republicans are never going to like us.” And regarding President Obama Wayne added: “… the right-wings’, at times, blatant disrespect of the oval office has more to do with Obama’s racial make-up than his policies.” Wayne concedes that while the criticism over the President’s handling of the economy might be understandable, “Some of the talk has gone beyond politics. “I don’t think I have to say that for everybody to know that,”

While this set of statements is not groundbreaking or revolutionary, the fact that they came from Lil Wayne really made me think about the current social/political climate in this country. The Obama Era was supposed to be the start of a new beginning. Not only ushering a new school of thought into the political arena, but signaling that Black People had finally “made it” in America. The glass ceiling was broken. However, from my perspective, and apparently the perspective of others, this has not been the case. Never before has a President of the United States of America been treated with such disrespect. The media often refers to him as “Obama”, dropping the honored title of “President” that traditionally goes in front of the name of the head of state. Additionally, President Obama has been cursed at in congress, has had his American citizenship challenged and has endured demands that his birth certificate be made public. Lil Wayne, a multiplatinum music artist and crossover star, echo’s sentiments that are undoubtedly going through the minds of a...

Read the rest of this article at bc.edu/aads

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