

# Proposal for a Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity

Division of the Social Sciences  
University of Chicago  
Winter 2022

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## 1. Executive Summary

After careful consideration and a year-long investigation of the optimal institutional and intellectual setting for the study of race at the University of Chicago, this Committee finds that a new Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity (RDI) would best position the University to facilitate field-defining research to advance knowledge of these concepts. The creation of a Department of RDI would put the University at the forefront of the study of race and provide a distinctive institutional setting for innovative and pathbreaking scholarship.

A Department of RDI would unite three concepts that have shaped the modern world and continue to reverberate in contemporary thought, action, culture, and policy. Race, understood by social scientists and humanists as a social construction that defines difference and shapes relations among people; diaspora, formed through processes of migration and practices of collective meaning-making; and indigeneity, which refers to the categorization and self-identity of people dwelling on a given territory that has been subjected, often violently, to occupation or settlement, are increasingly viewed as interrelated and co-constituted. Rigorous and distinctive study of these concepts is inherently interdisciplinary and would be best realized at the University within a department.

The University today boasts a number of pre-eminent scholars in these fields and has historically played an important role in the theorization of race, diaspora, and indigeneity and empirical work on those topics. Indeed, the University has the honor of having been the locus of the first course in Negro history at any major Midwestern university, and faculty here developed pioneering theories and methods foundational to the field of Native American and Indigenous Studies. The University is also home to the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, which offers a highly demanded major and minor and whose classes regularly attract more than 3000 undergraduate students per year with over half of the course offerings consistently over-subscribed. As an urban university situated in the South Side of Chicago, the influence of race, diaspora, and indigeneity permeates our local community, politics, culture, and physical environment, making it particularly crucial to study and engage the forces that continue to shape the present and future of our institution and the broader world.

Despite historical and current strengths, the University's academic structure presents several challenges to reclaiming pre-eminence in these fields. The most pressing issue is the absence of a department dedicated to these concepts, with the consequence that scholars studying race, diaspora, and indigeneity are scattered across the University, constrained by the norms of their traditional disciplines. A department, with the capacity to hire and promote faculty and train doctoral students, is essential if we are to recruit and retain the most innovative scholars many of whom have trained in interdisciplinary departments and are thus unlikely to be housed, or fully intellectually at home, in traditional disciplines. This inability to sustain a critical mass of excellent scholars in this area has been the root cause for the University's loss of prior preeminence in the field. Most of our peer institutions have long-standing departments of African American, or Africana studies, along with institutes, centers, programs, or departments for Latinx, Asian American studies or Ethnic studies. These dedicated centers of scholarship have enabled our peers to assemble and retain strong cadres of faculty and traditions of student

training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as achieve high visibility for their accomplishments in these areas.

The establishment of a Department of RDI presents an opportunity for the University to shape the field by introducing a new and innovative approach centered around key concepts. The dominant paradigm of the last sixty years has been to create units focusing on a specific history and intellectual tradition (e.g. African American studies or Asian American studies). Recognizing the limits of that paradigm and drawing on cutting-edge work that blurs these boundaries, there has been some movement over the last decade toward consolidating these departments into single units that generally function as umbrella organizations.

Our proposal calls for something very different. Committed to boundary-crossing scholarship, the Department of RDI will not be internally organized as an assemblage of identity-based (i.e. African American, Native American, Latinx, or Jewish) or of geographically defined (i.e. U.S., Asia, Europe, or Africa) research groups. Although members of the Department of RDI will have differing specializations, it will be an integrated unit that will facilitate and encourage cross-fertilization of thought in relation to key research topics that are too often analyzed in isolation from each other. Examples include antisemitism and racism, Native and African American studies, the Chinese diaspora and the world created by Atlantic slavery. In other words, the ambition of the Department of RDI will be to foster a *breadth of vision* and *conceptual rigor* that will enable scholars to tackle some of the most challenging issues of our current historical moment in ways that defy intellectual, disciplinary, and geographic siloing. This innovative, ambitious, and challenging intellectual agenda will be supported by a creative and robust institutional structure and our curricular programs. Both will encourage, even oblige, collaboration across traditional fault lines (qualitative vs. quantitative, empirical vs. theoretical, a focus on race vs. indigeneity or diaspora, geographic specialization) among the Department's faculty. In sum, we are not interested in "catching up" to peer institutions; rather, the Department of RDI will set the future trajectory of research in these critically important areas.

The Department of RDI builds on existing and historical strengths of the University. It will anchor the recruitment and retention of excellent scholars working in these areas, and it will serve students through the provision of a new major and minor undergraduate programs, a core sequence, graduate masters and PhD certificates and, five years hence, a doctoral program. Establishment of the Department of RDI will provide current and future faculty the best institutional and intellectual context in which to pursue field-defining research and teaching in these fields.

## **2. Why a Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity?**

### ***2.1. The Field of Study***

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have established that, beginning in the Atlantic world, the modern era was marked by processes of imperial expansion, regimes of forced labor from indenture to slavery, and new patterns of trade and migration. Together, these generated unprecedented forms of connection around the globe.<sup>1</sup> Political and social categories

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985); Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley:

made and remade by these processes continue to shape our contemporary world. Race, diaspora, and indigeneity are central among these categories. While ancient, medieval, and early modern conceptualizations of difference as well as ideas of autochthony played an important role in social, economic, religious, and political life—and some version of the ideas behind the words race, diaspora, and indigeneity predate the modern period—each of these concepts took on new meaning that continue to reverberate in the present.<sup>2</sup>

Modern conceptions of race emerged over the course of the early modern period out of the complex interactions between plantation agriculture and imperial commercial expansion. The precise priority of causal factors remains an area of lively scholarly debate that has further refined scholars' understanding of the articulation of material forces and their conceptual terrain.<sup>3</sup> The mechanisms by which race has persisted and been reconfigured stand out as central questions for discussion across a number of disciplines.<sup>4</sup> Why, at some historical moments, has race been understood in biological terms and at others in social and cultural terms? How are its transformations recorded and interpreted in culture? How have ideas about race and racist practices been contested politically? And, how has this contestation itself shaped its meaning? Central to these questions is a view of race as *both* a structure of categorization produced through unequal power relations *and* as a site of identification, meaning, and agency.

Diaspora, originating from a Greek word meaning “scatter,” has a long history. It is a concept most prominently associated in the West with the Jewish experience.<sup>5</sup> Out of this experience emerged central predicaments—the relation to an originary lost homeland, the maintenance of shared culture across vast distances, and the challenges posed by assimilation—

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University of California Press, 2008); Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2014); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Cedric J. Robinson, *On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism and Cultures of Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> David Nirenberg, “Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of ‘Jewish’ Blood in Late Medieval Spain,” in *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Demetra Kasimis, *The Perpetual Immigrant and the Limits of Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> For example, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) and *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). For a critique of the latter, see Thomas C. Holt, “Of Human Progress and Intellectual Apostasy” (A Review Essay of David Brion Davis’s *Slavery and Human Progress*), *Reviews in American History* 15 (March 1987): 50-58.

<sup>4</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Robert Wald Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*, third edition (New York: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> On this history of the concept of diaspora, see Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity,” *Critical Inquiry* 19 (4) (1993), pp. 693-725; Brent Hayes Edwards, “Diaspora” in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (New York: NYU Press, 2014). For a different account, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. pp. 205-211.

that reappear in other diasporic contexts. In recent years, diaspora has been taken up widely by scholars of African American studies who have examined the practices and processes through which people of African descent in the Americas forged complex and unstable transnational linkages and came to see themselves in supranational terms. The Americas have also been a fruitful site of thinking through overlapping diasporas—for instance, the presence of millions of Indian and Chinese indentured workers and their descendants in the Caribbean since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> While the Atlantic world features prominently in contemporary studies of diaspora, it is by no means the only site. The Indian Ocean world has a long history of migratory circuits linking the subcontinent of India with Southeast Asia, and East Africa; a Chinese diaspora is also found across southeast Asia and in more recent times across the Pacific.<sup>7</sup>

Diaspora is entangled in a complex, historical pattern with race, producing variegated experiences across the world and within given diasporas as well as between them. Moments of conflict or cooperation between different groups that have been differentially affected by these processes raise crucial questions: when, where, and how have race and diaspora been linked? Through what political, social, and cultural practices do individuals come to identify as members of a diaspora? Do diasporas crystallize around memory and heritage or are they also forward-thinking and aspirational? How do those identifications interact with the surrounding social order? To what innovations of thought and artefacts of culture does diaspora give rise? Can similar questions be raised about claims to indigeneity? Such interrogations are pivotal to the field of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity.

The movement of peoples and resources central to the modern world inevitably disrupted and transformed the relations between peoples and the lands they inhabited. While the noun “indigeneity” is of more recent date, the related adjective, “indigenous,” was coined during the period of European expansion; the earliest known English usage dates from 1646 and differentiates “Negroes” from “indigenous...natives.”<sup>8</sup> The categories of indigenous and indigeneity have purchase, in different ways and to varying degrees, in the Americas, Europe, Oceania, Asia, and Africa. In North America, for instance, indigeneity refers to the shared experience of the peoples who understand their peoplehood in terms of place-based relationships to the land, air, and waters of their sovereign homelands—the relationships disrupted most often by European colonialism. This is not the case globally. What gives rise to such differences? How do various Indigenous peoples negotiate with power imposed from without? Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars largely separated the category of indigeneity from race and diaspora.

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<sup>6</sup> Moon Ho-Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2006). Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). Mae Ngai, *The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics* (New York: Norton, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Sunil Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Futures of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). For the East African side of the story, see Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). For that earlier history’s impact on western Europe, see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). On the Chinese diaspora in the Pacific, see Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez and Anthony Reid, eds., *The Chinese Diaspora in the Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Indigenous entry in the Oxford English Dictionary, On-line, edition. <https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/94474?redirectedFrom=indigenous&> On the contemporary state of the field of Indigenous studies, see Aileen Moreton-Robinson, ed., *Critical Indigenous Studies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016).

More recently, however, scholars are exploring their complex intersections, which have taken a variety of forms from Latin America to Australia.<sup>9</sup> What accounts for divergences and what have been their consequences? How are central modern concepts of political and social life, from sovereignty to property, reconfigured from the perspective of Indigenous political thought and cultural practices?

As this brief overview suggests, race, diaspora, and indigeneity are contested concepts and categories. Rather than fixing them as stable terms, we aim to historicize and theorize them in specific temporal and spatial contexts. That is, the starting point of work in this field is to ask what each of them mean and what they are in any given context, rather than to assume that we already know. Bringing them together, we can explore unexpected convergences, address persistent theoretical blind spots, and generate new research agendas. The complex intersections among these concepts are an opportunity to advance our understanding of each term. Our research and teaching will be concerned with explicating when and why these concepts have been, and are, mobilized to explain or justify human behaviors and actions, as well as how they have provided the grounds for resistance and creativity. Key configurations, movements and moments of resistance include, but are by no means limited to European expansion and the consequent establishment of colonial empires, both settler and not; slavery, slave refusals and revolts, and their afterlives; diasporas and migrations, and the cultural and political movements they brought in their wake; and, postcolonial societies and mobilizations for sovereignty, reparations and racial justice.

Finally, the Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity will not monopolize research and teaching on race, diaspora or indigeneity at the University of Chicago. We anticipate, of course, that colleagues throughout the University will continue to study each of these concepts, and the many histories and practices to which they refer, with specific disciplinary methods in existing departmental formations—and we look forward to building synergy in partnership with them. However, by bringing together an interdisciplinary cohort of scholars in one department explicitly established around the investigation of race, diaspora, and indigeneity, and with a specific interest in fostering research across these concepts, we will stimulate field-defining scholarship. The questions posed within RDI will resonate widely around the world as the interlocking processes described above occur at a global scale. Innovative and experimental in its approach as the only department of its kind, it will push the boundaries of the field in significant new directions.

## ***22. Theoretical and Methodological Orientation***

Effectively analyzing the material, political, affective, and cultural dimensions of race, diaspora, and indigeneity in all of their complexity requires drawing on a range of methodological tools and theoretical frameworks. A capacious interdisciplinary department will allow us to see, study, think, know, and trace the structures of racialization and racial formation, the practices of diaspora, and the modalities of indigeneity. Because the processes that have given rise to these categories are complicated and ever evolving, we are committed to bringing

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<sup>9</sup> For an exploration of the intersections of Black and Indigenous studies, see Tiffany Lethabo King, *Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019). See also Shona Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).



the analytic tools (qualitative and quantitative, humanistic and social scientific) of traditional disciplines as well as newer interdisciplinary knowledge formations and forms of practice to bear. One of the limitations of the current situation—in which scholars working on race, diaspora, and indigeneity are scattered throughout the University, primarily engaged in conversation with colleagues with whom they share disciplinary approaches and methods but not a focus on these concepts or dynamics—is that they may be unaware of methods and frameworks that could be vitally useful to them. They are also constrained by the conventions and norms of the traditional disciplines that, in some cases, may limit productive and innovative research design. By bringing competing and complementary approaches to these terms, with the freedom and encouragement to approach these questions in new ways, we will advance scholarship in RDI.

The founding faculty come to the Department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity from a wide variety of conceptual and methodological standpoints. One approach taken up by colleagues in the Department will be a critical race theoretical framework. Because “Critical Race Theory” has become a vexed site of political and cultural conflict and much misunderstanding in the contemporary moment, it is useful to situate the scholarship associated with the term in its historical context. In its earliest forms, critical race theory emerged in the 1970s and names an orientation to racial discrimination in law advanced by a school of American legal scholars.<sup>10</sup> Its emergence was simultaneous with a general questioning of, and dissatisfactions with, the explanations of racial inequities then dominant in the social sciences. In dialogue with scholarship in other fields, these legal scholars argued that racial discrimination should be understood as the product of complex and interlocking institutional processes rather than the explicit and intentional actions of individuals. In time they also examined how race intersects with other positionalities including ability, class, gender, and sexuality. Finally, they innovated approaches to studying the law through the everyday experiences of marginalized communities. Among the founding faculty of RDI are colleagues whose work builds on, extends, and modifies critical race theory in important ways. More broadly, the faculty of RDI share with critical race theorists (and many other scholars) a commitment to exploring the structural grounding of racial differentiation and inequality and the ways in which race interacts with other social formations.

We underscore, however, that the goal of the new Department is not to endorse any one methodology or approach, but to foster the framing of maximally generative questions and research designs that will produce the widest-ranging and most powerful work in these crucial and intellectually challenging research areas. This is evident in the publications and research agendas of the founding faculty of the new Department.<sup>11</sup> It includes scholars who use both

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<sup>10</sup> For an overview of these central themes taken up by critical race theorists, see Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda et al. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement* (New York: The New Press, 1996); Derrick Bell, *The Derrick Bell Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> A selection of the publications of founding RDI faculty includes: Leora Auslander & Tom Holt, “Sambo in Paris: Race and Racism in the Iconography of Everyday Life,” in Sue Peabody & Tyler Stovall, eds. *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Joyce Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Adrienne Brown, *The Black Skyscraper:*

qualitative and quantitative methods; those who work on the past and those who focus on the present; and, colleagues who are primarily theorists as well as those who are empirically minded. There are colleagues who employ models and those who work on a unique case. Some of us engage questions that concern individual attitudes and beliefs and others with textual or visual representations. Some focus on how different economic or political regimes structure how race works in a given society. Some of us work at the intersections of those broad areas. The range and kind of sources and data we investigate is equally vast including texts, demographic data, maps, agricultural yields, labor statistics, voting records, archives documenting political processes, media, the press, material culture found through archaeological digs, in museums, oral histories, ethnographies, interviews, images, film, and music. This diversity of approaches, methods and materials offers the best hope of making breakthroughs in our understanding of race, diaspora, and indigeneity as we train the next generation of scholars in this field.

### 3. Relationship to Peer Institutions

Most of our peer institutions have long-standing departments of African American or Africana studies (see Appendix H). At most institutions, Black Studies departments are also accompanied by separate institutes, centers, programs or departments for Latinx, Asian American Studies or Ethnic Studies. This organization stems from the historical development of these fields.

Harvard, Berkeley, Michigan, Northwestern, San Francisco State, and Yale were in the first wave (1968-1972) of institutions to create departments of Black, African and African American or African American Studies. Others gradually followed: the University of Southern California in 1992, Brown in 2001, Texas-Austin in 2010, Penn in 2012, and, most recently, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies founded at Columbia in 2019. In February, 2021, the President of Stanford University publicly committed to supporting the

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*Architecture and the Perception of Race* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017); Cathy J. Cohen, *Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Eve Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); *Theaster Gates: Black Archive* (Bregenz: Kunsthau Bregenz, 2017); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Ryan Cecil Jobson, "Dead Labor: On Racial Capitalism and Fossil Capitalism," in *Histories of Racial Capitalism*, Destin Jenkins and Justin Leroy, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021); Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures* (New York: NYU Press, 2019); Omar McRoberts, *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Reuben Miller, *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 2021); Cecile B. Vigouroux & Salikoko Mufwene, eds. *Globalization and Language Vitality: Perspectives from Africa* (London: Continuum, 2008); François Richard, *Reluctant Landscapes: Historical Anthropologies of Political Experience in Siin, Senegal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Jacqueline Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Christopher Taylor, *Empire of Neglect: The West Indies in the Wake of British Liberalism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

creation of a Department of African and African American Studies once it has been approved by the faculty. Departments of Latinx Studies have an equally long history, with the earliest departments also founded from 1968 to 1972 and others following in the decades since. These are largely located in public universities, including Texas, Rutgers, Illinois, Minnesota, UC-Santa Cruz, and UC-Irvine. Departments of Native American Studies tend to be in major public universities in states (or provinces) with large Native American Sovereign Nations, including: the University of Oklahoma, the University of New Mexico, the University of Washington and the University of Alberta. There are few peer institutions that have dedicated departments of Asian American Studies or Diaspora Studies, and even fewer that have adopted broader configurations. Exceptions, however, include Ethnic Studies, founded at Berkeley in 1969 and USC's Department of American Studies and Ethnicity created in 1992. More recent formations include NYU's Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, which combines African American, Latinx, Asian American and other tracks founded in 2005 and Tufts University's Department of Race, Colonialism and Diaspora (founded 2019).

By organizing our department through the framework of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity, we purposefully avoid reproducing national and identity divisions within our department. We will instead be foregrounding our three conceptual anchors and organizing our teaching, research, and hiring through these shared terms. The aim here is to explore our conceptual anchors from a variety of histories and experiences attending not only to overlaps but also generative tensions across borders and territories. In this project we will be building on the research of a growing group of scholars whose work is at the intersection of Black and Indigenous studies; Asian American/Global Asia Studies and Black Studies; and Afro-Latinx Studies, which emerges from new hemispheric approaches to the study of race. We will also create a context for critical reflection on related, but distinct, categories, notably caste. Recent scholarship has highlighted the power of thinking about caste and race together in the South Asian context and beyond. The Department of RDI will, therefore, be in partnership with the Dalit Studies initiative – unique in the United States – at the University of Chicago.

Given this orientation, the Department of RDI will be one in which faculty and students interrogate these boundaries in ways that generate new questions about the making and meaning of race, diaspora and indigeneity. The department is committed to the study of these concepts while embracing the complications that arise from their juxtaposition; in doing so, it will attend to their shared histories and trajectories as well as the critical impasses between them as these concepts fail to become reducible to one another even as their constructions prove coeval. It is precisely this orientation that will make the new department a way for the University of Chicago to innovate new directions in the study of race, diaspora, and indigeneity.

Although we are proposing that the University of Chicago mark its own path, we fully acknowledge the crucial role played by the departments, centers, and institutes created over the last sixty years in universities across the country. By creating these departments our peer institutions have acknowledged that the development of new epistemologies and methods necessitates new institutional structures that can encourage, extend, evaluate, innovate within, and support rigorous intellectual engagements with the specific methods, objects of study, texts, and theories that have come to define those disciplines. The absence of such a department at the University of Chicago has long been felt by both students and faculty and remarked upon by our peers. If the University of Chicago seeks to maintain its position among the foremost sites of

innovative research and pedagogy within the city, the United States, and the world, it will be increasingly difficult to do so without a department centered on the study of the formations and dynamics of race, diaspora, and indigeneity that are constitutive of the modern world.

#### **4. Why a New Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Chicago and at the University of Chicago?**

In articulating a vision of this new Department, the Committee closely examined the record of race and indigenous studies at the University of Chicago, in the city of Chicago, and the intellectual landscape in the United States and abroad. Given our focus on diaspora, we were also attentive to the University's historic commitment to maintaining a global reach, and its more recent engagement in Area Studies. The central questions that animate the work of this Department have been pursued through various methods and disciplinary locations at the University. Our aim is to create a department that builds on the distinguished, but often unrecognized, scholarship in these areas, in order to create a new and powerful conceptual formation with which to address the intellectual and pedagogic challenges of the twenty-first century.

In particular, our work is informed by the history of Black and Indigenous Studies at the University of Chicago. Although these fields were never institutionalized at the University, canonical figures in these disciplines built robust programs and intellectual communities whose legacies continue to reverberate today. In addition to situating ourselves in relation to the histories of these fields at the University, we also think seriously about what it means to study race, diaspora, and indigeneity in the global city of Chicago.

In this section we provide short histories of Indigenous, Black, and Diasporic Studies in the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions at the University of Chicago, while also noting how we build on these legacies. Although we include mention of some colleagues currently working in these domains, our focus is on the University's historical contributions. We conclude this section with a discussion of the University's more recent engagement with Asian and Latinx Diaspora Studies. Section 5 identifies our current faculty strengths. Before turning to the current faculty, we also locate the Department of RDI in the context of the city and in the institutional landscape of the United States more broadly.

##### ***4.1. The History of the Study of Indigeneity at the University of Chicago***

While the University of Chicago does not have a dedicated Native American or Indigenous Studies program today, it has a long history of scholarship concerning Native American histories, languages, societies, and cultures. However, the University has, until recently, hired very few Native scholars working in any domain. Joseph Gone (Gros Ventre) held an Assistant Professor position for the Department of Comparative Human Development from 2000 to 2002 and Teresa Montoya (Diné) was hired as a Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow in 2019 and will transition to Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology in 2022. The University has lost our only other Indigenous faculty member in Native Studies, Elizabeth Reese (Yunpoví), Bigelow Fellow and Lecturer in Law, when she left for Stanford in June 2021.

In the decades following its inception, the Anthropology Department held a prominent role in the field of Native American and Indigenous Studies. Like other work done in this period,

much of it has been critiqued in the decades since. Nonetheless, the University counted among its faculty such early key figures in the field as Robert Redfield, Edward Sapir, and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown. Subsequently, Fred Eggan and Sol Tax joined the Department in the early 1930s, followed in the next decades by Ray Fogelson and Michael Silverstein. Sapir, Radcliffe-Brown and Silverstein did foundational work in linguistics—Sapir on Indigenous languages and Radcliffe-Brown on Indigenous kinship terminology, while Silverstein did extensive fieldwork in the Pacific Northwest on Chinookan languages, and among the Worora and Northern Kimberley Aboriginal societies in Australia. Redfield and Tax also moved beyond the borders of the United States, working on Indigenous societies in Mexico and Guatemala. Hired in the Department of Comparative Human Development in 1996, John Lucy made critical contributions to our knowledge of Mayan language, culture and thought. Among these scholars' publications were Eggan's *Social Organization of the Western Pueblos* (1950); *Social Anthropology of North American Tribes* (1937, 1955), edited by Fred Eggan and to which Sol Tax contributed; Sol Tax's, *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian economy* (1953, 1972); and the Smithsonian's authoritative *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 14, *Southeast* (2004), edited by Ray Fogelson. During her time at UChicago, Beth Povinelli (now at Columbia) did pathbreaking work in Australia with indigenous communities subjected to the legacies of settler colonialism and the liberal state's politics of multicultural recognition. The department also trained numerous graduate students in the field, notably several Indigenous scholars from the United States and beyond. Additionally, one of Tax's students, Nancy Oestreich Lurie, was a pioneer in the interdisciplinary methods of ethnohistory, a precursor to modern Native American and Indigenous Studies.

Starting in the late 1950s Sol Tax played a particularly important role. Notably, while working on the Fox Project with Meskwakie communities from 1948 to 1962, he developed the community-collaborative model of "action anthropology." Those commitments led to his collaboration with Indigenous intellectuals such as D'Arcy McNickle (Salish Kootenai) affiliated with the Newberry Library, and leaders of the Chicago American Indian Center including Willard LaMere (Ho-Chunk). Together, they hosted the American Indian Chicago conference in 1961. This meeting—one of the largest pan-Indian gatherings in American history—generated the Declaration of Indian Purpose, which defined the modern agenda of tribal sovereignty and self-determination that has shaped decades of political activism and continues to drive the resurgence of tribal nations in the twenty-first century.

The University followed up on this one-time meeting with sustained efforts to build relationships with the Indigenous community in the city. Sol Tax was a member of the Native American Committee, a multi-institutional group in Chicago that established the Native American Education Services College (NAES), a bold experiment in community education, in 1974. The University of Chicago maintained its membership in NAES until the early 2000s. Although the program shut down in 2005, the University remains home to the NAES's archives. Through all these efforts, the University of Chicago created deep connections with Native peoples in Chicago—the oldest urban Indian community in the U.S.—pioneered the intellectual program for training the next generation of graduate students, and developed theories and methods foundational to the field of Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS).

There has been a resurgence of energy in Indigenous Studies at the University in recent years, reinforced by engagement with the D'Arcy McNickle Center at the Newberry Library and the National Consortium in American Indian Studies (NCAIS) centered there. The D'Arcy McNickle Center is one of the only institutional centers for the study of Indigenous societies and cultures in the U.S., and because it awards residential fellowships for use of the

renowned Ayer Collection it is a national center of gravity for the subject. Reaching out from the Newberry, the NCAIS is composed of twenty institutions and is one of the field's most important intellectual communities in the U.S. (and increasingly Canada). Before he left the University, Justin Richland in the Anthropology Department renewed the University of Chicago's membership in the NCAIS and Matthew Kruer, in History, serves as the current liaison. Hired in 2007, Lenore Grenoble extends the University's engagement with Indigenous linguistics in her research on Arctic languages. These colleagues, and others not named here, and resources make greater investment by the University of Chicago in Indigenous Studies all the more rational.

Furthermore, under the leadership of Jonathan Lear, the Neubauer Collegium has undertaken several high-profile collaborative projects, including the Open Fields collaboration with the Field Museum and the Apsáalooke Women and Warriors exhibition. Teresa Montoya (Diné), a recent hire in Anthropology who works on concerns of sovereignty, environmental ruination, and energy development in the Indigenous Southwest, is currently serving as guest curator with the Field Museum in their remodeling of the Native American wing. This collaboration further solidifies continued relationships between the University of Chicago and other cultural institutions in the Chicagoland region that are needed to build and sustain Indigenous Studies. As such, there is indication of the potential for greater interdisciplinary and institutional collaboration in the development of Indigenous and Black studies by junior faculty such as Montoya in Anthropology and SJ Zhang in English who are co-leading the project, *Trac(e)ing Relations: Blackness & Indigeneity in the Americas*, which engages these emergent intersections around the core theme of "relationality" across their respective scholarship in literature, aesthetics, and political formation. Historically, many of these efforts have been balkanized in different departments, divisions, and centers. The collaborative potential of *Trac(e)ing Relations*, and other similar projects, would benefit and flourish under the aegis of a unified department.

The new department will build on this resurgence by focusing on themes central to the field of Indigenous Studies as it is constituted in US, Canadian, and Australian academic institutions: sovereignty and the relationship between land and place-based peoplehood. Our work will, however, extend beyond Chicago and the Americas. That is, the new department will also examine how categories like "indigenous" and "native" circulate in other political contexts such as Africa or Asia where questions of land, language, and sovereignty carry different, yet often comparable, valences. Among its areas of inquiry will be the adoption of the self-descriptor "Indigenous" itself by communities engaged in struggles against settler colonialism to build transnational and intersectional solidarities with other Indigenous peoples. Secondly, we will also build on the University's strength in linguistics. Given the centrality of language to Indigenous ontologies, the study of Indigenous languages is another central preoccupation of the field.

#### **42 *The History of the Study of Race at the University of Chicago***

The history of the study of race at the University of Chicago is differently complex; although historically most of the faculty who have worked on race at the University have been white, the University has been home to a substantial number of Black faculty who have done

foundational research in the field. Our scholarship is deeply informed by the work of these pioneering Black social scientists. Inspired by the city of Chicago's crucial role as a major destination of African American migration at the turn of the twentieth century, University of Chicago scholars, notably Robert E. Park, initiated studies of "race adjustment." Although the premise of these studies became controversial later, at the time they attracted Black students who would go on to shape the fields of African American studies and of studies on race. Among the earliest was Charles S. Johnson, who earned his PhD in sociology in 1917 and went on to write pathbreaking studies of race relations, especially in the rural South. Following Johnson in the same department fourteen years later, E. Franklin Frazier produced pioneering studies of Black family life and became the first Black president of the American Sociological Association. A few years later came Oliver Cromwell Cox who, after completing his PhD in sociology in 1938, went on to be a leading figure in the study of racial capitalism, writing among other works *Caste, Class, and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (1948) and *Race Relations: Elements and Social Dynamics* (1976). Although trained at the University of Chicago, the employment opportunities for these eminent scholars were limited to historically Black colleges and universities where they made important contributions in research, publication, and training students. Allison Davis was an exception; after earning his PhD from Chicago's Anthropology Department in 1942, he was hired in the University of Chicago's Department of Education and earned tenure here in 1948, becoming the first African American tenured at a major predominantly white institution. While at Chicago, Davis conducted field research in Natchez, Mississippi that provided the basis for the landmark 1941 study, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class*. A young St. Clair Drake, then an instructor at Dillard University in New Orleans, served as a research assistant for the project under Davis. Drake followed in Davis's footsteps to pursue a doctorate in anthropology at Chicago and went on, with Horace R. Cayton, to write the groundbreaking 1945 work about the city of Chicago, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. After a long career as one of the only Black faculty members at Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he founded the nation's first African American Studies Department, Drake was hired by Stanford University to do the same there in 1969. Working in the same period, the distinguished dancer Katherine Dunham in her time at the University troubled the lines between anthropology and dance, in both theory and practice—creating a school that remains influential today.

The subsequent generation included Nathan Hare (PhD Sociology, 1962) the first person hired in the United States to coordinate an African American Studies program, at San Francisco State University in 1968. Although most of the doctoral students at the University working on questions of race before 1970 were in Sociology, Lorenzo Dow Turner and Benjamin E. Mays were notable exceptions. Turner wrote on anti-slavery themes in antebellum U.S. literature, becoming the first African American awarded a PhD in English in the University in 1926. Mays followed almost a decade later, earning his doctorate in 1935, having written on "The Idea of God in Contemporary Negro Literature" in the Divinity School. Turner went on to teach at Fisk University where he designed one of the nation's earliest African American Studies programs before returning to Chicago to teach at Roosevelt University in 1946. Mays earned national recognition as a professor in the Divinity School at Howard University and then Morehouse College, where he mentored the young Martin Luther King, Jr.

The University's creditable record of minority faculty appointments during the interwar and early postwar years was markedly uneven, however, since the Sociology Department alone



was responsible for most of these appointments. Notably, despite an enviable publication record, including *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement*, and strong endorsements from Economics Department chair Paul Douglass (later U.S. Senator from Illinois) and Frank Knight, Abram Harris was recruited from Howard University in 1946 as a professor in the College but not in the Economics Department.

It was only in the mid-1960s, when many more historically white colleges and universities began hiring African American faculty, including those working on race, that Chicago lured the distinguished historian John Hope Franklin from Brooklyn College. When Franklin joined the History Department in 1964 as a senior scholar, he had already published *From Slavery to Freedom* in 1947 and *Reconstruction after the Civil War* in 1961, among other major texts. Along with C. Vann Woodward, he had also been a historical consultant to the plaintiff's attorneys in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case when it was argued before the Supreme Court. In 1972, he was joined by William Julius Wilson, who joined the Sociology Department from the University of Massachusetts. In the Humanities Division, George Kent became the first tenured Black professor in the English Department in 1972, specializing in African American literature.

While much of this work focused centrally on the United States, the University was also home to pioneering scholarship on the African diaspora in a hemispheric perspective. This includes the work of the late anthropologists R.T. Smith and Michel-Rolph Trouillot. Smith studied race, kinship, and family organization in Guyana and Trouillot made enduring contributions to the scholarship on the Haitian Revolution and the political economy of the Duvalier dictatorship. Former faculty members Cécile Fromont, in Art History—who works on visual, material, and religious culture of Africa and Latin America—and Daniel Desormeaux—who examines the historical and anthropological link between French and Caribbean literature and culture after the Haitian Revolution—extended these hemispheric and transatlantic approaches. The ongoing Slavery and Visual Culture working group, led by Larissa Brewer-García, Allyson Nadia Field, Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, Danielle Roper, and Christopher Taylor, explores the relationship between visibility and regimes of racialization during slavery and its afterlives. It breaks the traditional barriers between disciplines, and productively engages the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, and Lusophone worlds, which is a model for RDI.

The question of institutionalizing these diverse bodies of scholarship on race and racialization has been frequently raised. In the early 1990s, Michael Dawson (Political Science), Thomas Holt (History), and Kenneth Warren (English) addressed this issue, initially through the creation of the “Reproduction of Race and Racial Ideologies” workshop, and subsequently through the founding of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, twenty-five years ago. The workshop and Center continue to foster interdisciplinary and cross-divisional conversations, research agendas, and programming on the study of race. This proposal, written by affiliates of the Center, has been incubated within this context.

The Department of RDI builds on these foundations in the social sciences as well as more recent initiatives in the Humanities Division, especially the hiring of a new cohort of scholars of African American and Caribbean literature in the English Department. Our conceptual framework and broad temporal reach will enable our work on race to productively complement



that being done in the Departments of Black Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and of African American Studies at Northwestern University.

### **43** *The History of Asian and Latinx Diaspora Studies at the University of Chicago*

The history and current situation of Asian and Latinx diaspora studies at the University are distinct both from those of Black and Indigenous Studies and from each other. In the domain of the Asian diasporas, there is a pattern of having a single scholar of Asian American Studies at a time, often located in the History Department. Thus, after Akira Iriye left the University for Harvard in 1989, he was eventually replaced by Mae Ngai, who departed in turn for Columbia. Matthew Briones in History is now one of the few—if not the only—faculty members squarely in the field, although René Flores, in Sociology, works on both Asian American and Latinx migration. This is particularly unfortunate, given the consistent demands by undergraduates for more systematic course offerings in Asian American Studies, the strength of both South Asian and East Asian area studies at the University, and the potential for synergy with scholars working on other diasporas. The Department of RDI has a firm commitment to developing further strength in the field, with a particular focus on scholars like Briones and Flores who have an interest in the intersection or comparison of Asian and other diasporas and to moving beyond the U.S. case.

There is a long and distinguished history of the study of the Iberian peninsula and of the nations born in the aftermath of Spanish and Portuguese imperialism in the Americas, with colleagues in the Humanities and Social Science Divisions. The History Department alone was home to the celebrated Mexicanists Friedrich Katz and John Coatsworth. Emilio Kourí, Mauricio Tenorio, Brodwyn Fischer, Dain Borges, and Mary Hicks now teach in Latin American history at the University. Romance Languages and Literatures, Art History, Comparative Human Development and Anthropology have also had distinguished scholars of Latin America and the Caribbean. Notably, in Romance Languages and Literatures, Agnes Lugo-Ortiz has initiated many innovative and important projects in the Spanish Caribbean since arriving at the University in 1996. The Katz Center for Mexican Studies and the Center for Latin American Studies have provided essential support and community for faculty and students working in those fields.

The University does not, however, have a comparably strong history of teaching or research on the lives of those who emigrated *from* Latin America and the Caribbean in the twentieth century and into the present. There certainly have been courses taught and excellent dissertations written. But it appears that Raul Coronado, hired in 2004, was the University's first hire in Latinx diaspora studies; the English Department appointed him in the field of Mexican American and Chicana/o literature. He overlapped at the University with the art historian Cécile Fromont, who works on visual culture in Latin America and Africa. Ramón Gutiérrez, a specialist in the history of the U.S. Southwest, with a focus on relations between Indigenous and Latinx peoples, joined the History Department in 2007. Gutiérrez was the only successful hire out of an attempted five-person cluster hire in Latina/o Studies and has now retired. Both Coronado and Fromont have since left the University—Coronado for the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley and Fromont for the Art History Department at Yale, where she also has close ties to the Department of African American Studies. As will be discussed below, the hiring of a number of colleagues in the last decade has rebuilt strength in

the field, including a number of scholars working in comparative, critical race and diasporic studies paradigms.

Recent hires, especially in the Humanities, have expanded the number of colleagues on campus working on the Latinx diasporas from the Americas to Europe to the Philippines. Among this cohort are Edgar Garcia and Rachel Galvin, who were hired by the English Department. In 2018, René Flores, was hired by Sociology, joining Robert Vargas there. Kris Trujillo, whose research sits at the intersection of religious studies, Latinx literature, and queer theory, was hired by Comparative Literature in 2019. Other colleagues working in the field have also joined the Department of Romance Languages and Literature recently, including Larissa Brewer-Garcia and Danielle Roper. Sergio Delgado Moya, who works in Latinx Studies, will be joining the University in 2022.

The current dispersal of scholars in the Latinx field across departments and divisions at the University of Chicago reflects, in part, a longstanding question about the proper departmental “home” for this interdisciplinary, transnational, and translanguagual field, whose focus on race, indigeneity, and the concept of diaspora will make important contributions to the Department of RDI. The Department will, furthermore, facilitate the hiring and retention of both junior and senior scholars in the field. Finally, the Department of RDI at Chicago, by conceptualizing the Latinx diaspora in interaction with other diasporic racialized groups and Indigenous peoples, will productively complement the departments of Latin American and Latino Studies at DePaul and Latina/Latino Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana and the programs at Northwestern and UIC.

#### *44 The History of the Study of Diaspora at the University of Chicago*

The focus on diaspora adds a new framework and model to the University’s historic strengths in global, international and Jewish studies. The University has long been distinguished by its offerings in area studies. The Departments of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, for example, offer unparalleled training in the languages and literatures of these regions. The Centers corresponding to each of these Area Studies departments, as well as the Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies and the Committee on African Studies provide further support for intellectual exchange among specialists in each of these broad regions. These strengths are supplemented by rich manuscript and library holdings that have made the University a premiere institution for area studies. While these departments, committees, and centers are defined by geographic region, the Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies supports work on Jewish life and culture throughout the world, much of which addresses the concept and practice of diaspora. Recently, the introduction of a Global Studies major in the College and the formation of the Center for International Social Science Research have emerged as key anchors for internationally oriented research and pedagogy.

The new Department’s focus on diaspora complements the growing emphasis on international, global, and Jewish studies in two novel ways. First, the Department will be concerned with circuits of migration and translation that exceed regions, connecting for instance the Near East and South and East Asia to other regions like the Americas and Africa. Second, by

attending to transnational cultural and political circuits, the diasporic frame questions fixed notions of identity and belonging to draw attention to the uneven practices of positioning, the slippages of translation, and the contestations over difference that attend articulations of community. Thus, in distinction to area studies approaches, diaspora is often framed through transregional, transnational, and oceanic lenses. Diasporic projects of Pan-Africanism, Pan-Asianism, and Latinidad, to provide only a few examples, can be productively approached from this vantage point with an eye to the unstable and contested processes of identification.

Finally, our commitment to the city of Chicago offers an opportunity to conjoin the local and the global, by examining how Chicago sits at the intersection of transnational processes of race-making, indigeneity, and migration.

#### *45. The Study of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Chicago*

Histories of racial inequality, settler colonialism, and migration as well as the aesthetic and political forms of self-fashioning in relation to race, diaspora, and indigeneity permeate our physical, social, and cultural infrastructures in the city of Chicago. Conjoining the local and global will be central to the Department's approaches and priorities. This will enable our students to have a better understanding of how the global nature and operations of race, indigeneity and diaspora shape their location on the South Side of Chicago. Moreover, UChicago's outsized role in the historical theorization of race, diaspora, and indigeneity makes it even more essential that our University more actively reclaim and center the study of these processes. Understanding these concepts, embedded in varying ways within some of Chicago's monikers and shorthands—Nature's Metropolis, the Black Metropolis, the White City, the Second City, the City that Works, Chi-Raq, and even "Chicago" which is itself as derived from Algonquian language terms such as Zhekaogynak in Potawatomi—are vital to not just the study of the city of Chicago but to our lives as residents and neighbors here.

## **5. Faculty**

As repeatedly underscored by scholars from whom we have sought advice in the course of framing this proposal, the University of Chicago has both extraordinary strengths and lamentable lacunae among the faculty able to build and sustain a department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity. As will be detailed below, we have many distinguished scholars at all ranks in certain fields, especially Black studies, but the University has failed to hire or retain colleagues in other key areas. While we have a cohort of vitally important senior colleagues, over the next few years, we will face the loss, through retirement, of some key members of this group. Due to a variety of special initiatives in recent years, much of our strength comes from a more recent cohort of fantastic postdoctoral fellows and assistant professors. They represent the cutting edge of their respective research areas, but because they will still be navigating the processes of tenure and promotion, they will not be able to carry the heavy administrative burden that getting a new department off the ground will require. It is clear, therefore, that substantial hiring will be necessary if this department is to succeed. Before we turn to our plans to build from the outside, we provide information on our current ranks.

## 51. *Current Faculty*

Twenty University of Chicago faculty intend to join the new Department, with the vast majority retaining their positions in their originary departments. Their scholarship ranges widely. The colleagues whose research focuses on African American Studies, broadly defined, are: Cathy Cohen, a scholar of Black and youth politics as well as of gender and sexuality; Adam Green, who works on African American cultural history; Adrienne Brown, an analyst of the racialization of space in U.S. cities; Omar McRoberts, who focuses on race and collective action as well as Black religious practice; Joyce Bell, who writes on race, the professions, and social movements in the United States; and Michael Dawson, a scholar of Black politics in the United States. Theaster Gates is a visual artist whose diverse body of work addresses conceptions and instantiations of race while Kara Keeling and Jacqueline Stewart both bring expertise in African American film. Eve Ewing uses a variety of genres from monograph, through poetry, to graphic novels, to explicate the dynamics of schooling and urban violence. Reuben Miller addresses the crucial issue of the impact of race and mass incarceration on individual lives and communities. Margaret Beale Spencer studies the dynamics of youth learning, particularly among students of color.

Colleagues who work on Blackness, race, and diaspora outside the United States include: Sophia Azeb, who works on theories of diaspora and decolonization; Adom Getachew, who focuses on Black political thought; François Richard, who has engaged questions of race in Senegal and, more recently, Mexico; Leora Auslander, who works on the past and present of racialization in France and the Atlantic world, as well as on the Jewish diasporas; and, Salikoko Mufwene, who brings a specialization in Atlantic English creole languages, African contact languages, and the emergence of African American English.

We gain added strength from recent hiring in the Humanities and Social Sciences that has created a vibrant cohort of scholars working in British, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies. Many of those colleagues are not able, for the moment, to consider full participation in the Department of RDI, but two key scholars will join the new department. These are Ryan Jobson, who works on racial capitalism and energy, with an emphasis on the Caribbean; and Chris Taylor who analyzes slavery and postcolonial theory in the Americas. For the moment, only one colleague working in Latinx or Indigenous Studies, N. Tulio Bermúdez, in the Linguistics Department, is able to envisage joining the Department as a founding member.

The roster of faculty above are an interdisciplinary group drawn from the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions, as well as the Crown and Harris Schools. The list reflects the long-standing deep strengths of the University of Chicago in the fields of African American politics, history, and culture. They are complemented by scholars of the global and transnational Black and Latinx diasporas, domains in which the University's strength is of more recent date. Together this group forms an important nucleus for the new Department, but as we highlight below, challenges remain for building a robust roster of faculty in the Department, and new hires will be needed to realize the breadth and ambition of the Department. We take each of these up in the following sections.

Finally, after much deliberation, we became convinced that the most powerful work in the fields of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian Diaspora will be done by those working with the Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity paradigm. The Department therefore requires strength in all of those areas. We do currently have the core faculty necessary to start this project, and that core will expand with time as postdoctoral fellows and assistant professors advance through the ranks (assuming that we are able to retain them). As we have noted above, however, the current faculty of the proposed Department is concentrated in Black studies, with particular depth in African American politics, history and culture. But that will not suffice, and their retention will be ever more tenuous if we do not build a robust department to support their work. In order for the Department of RDI to succeed and be the national and international model we envision, we need to fill significant lacunae in the current faculty. For example, in 2021, there are only three faculty working centrally in the area of Indigenous studies and all of them are either lecturers or assistant professors; and the situation in the Asian diaspora, with only one faculty member centrally in the field, is equally serious. Finally, critically and unsurprisingly, given that we are proposing a department for the future, rather than the past, or even the present, the vast majority of the faculty in the field currently at the University of Chicago, and all of the senior faculty, were trained within traditional disciplines rather than in Race, African American, Ethnic, or Indigenous Studies. We will therefore be particularly focused on hiring colleagues who have been trained in these new formations.

## *5.2 Hiring Priorities and Strategies*

The above challenges create opportunities for strategic hiring that brings senior faculty to Chicago, building on current and new initiatives to ensure that we can truly live up to the promise of RDI. These hires will be solely located in the proposed department, thereby giving it a solid foundation as it expands undergraduate and graduate teaching.

We are fully confident that we will be able to attract excellent scholars of all ranks to RDI. As shown above, the University of Chicago's Department will be unique in the United States and yet is one that clearly emerges out of new directions in scholarship. For senior colleagues, joining RDI would not be simply a move to a new department, a new university, in a new city; it will be an opportunity to think in a new way about their work. For junior colleagues currently being trained in one of the existing PhD programs, it will provide them an extraordinary opportunity to shape a new intellectual project in a university with a distinguished history and a critical mass of innovative, creative, and energetic colleagues.

We plan a combination of targeted and open searches, staggered over ten years, starting in the second year of the department's existence with the aim of hiring 13 scholars over that period. We will identify and recruit colleagues with the following in mind: (1) the need for senior colleagues established in their respective fields who can lead and shape the department, (2) the need for coverage of important areas where we currently lack strengths including Indigenous studies, Latinx studies and Asian-American/Global Asia studies, Dalit Studies and, (3) the expectation that new hires, whatever their area of specialization, should demonstrate interest in working within a Race, Diaspora, and Indigenous Studies paradigm, which entails

transnational and comparative perspectives. This hiring strategy will allow us to provide both undergraduate and graduate courses and advising in areas in which such offerings are now painfully few, *and* develop the department's field-shaping intellectual profile. Critical to that, we will also seek balance among social science and humanities approaches.

### *5.3 Strategies for Fostering an Interdisciplinary Department Culture*

As is clear from the above hiring plan, the scale and ambition of RDI will require a broad range of scholars whose substantive and methodological interests will vary widely. This is not distinctive; many Social Science departments are homes to scholars whose methodologies range from the humanistic to the quantitative. Nonetheless, as a new department, RDI will have to think carefully about fostering a department culture that eschews silos and generates dialogues and research programs across the substantive and methodological commitments represented among the faculty. The committee discussed this issue with our external advisors as well as deans and chairs across the University and identified intellectual and institutional strategies to foster interdisciplinarity and collaboration.

First of all, our hiring strategy has also been designed to address this challenge. We will not only recruit scholars who will add needed strength in areas in which we currently have few faculty, but seek out colleagues whose work bridges across at least two of the conceptual categories. Scholars already working at the intersections of these categories will find the RDI model most conducive to their work and will serve as conduits for other members of the department whose primary area is race, or diaspora or indigeneity. A number of the founding faculty who work at the intersection of race and diaspora are a model for this kind of hiring.

Second, borrowing from the Anthropology Department, RDI will host a department-wide seminar which will be the focal point of the Department's intellectual life. Having one departmental seminar, rather than several organized around specific substantive interests, encourages faculty members to interact regularly with scholarship outside of their specific domains. It is also an opportunity to ensure that the department is connected to major trends of various related fields. This model of fostering intellectual synergies carries into the Department's teaching. As will be clear in the following section, the Department's offerings at the undergraduate and graduate level will not be organized around specific fields (e.g. African American studies, Asian American studies, etc). Instead, students will be exposed to work across these fields and will be required to have some facility with all three concepts and their genealogies even if ultimately they focus in on one of the areas.

From an institutional perspective, RDI's hiring in its initial years will be focused on full appointments within the Department. Given that most of the founding members of the Department will be jointly appointed, it is crucial that we have a cohort of scholars whose appointments rest solely within RDI. In order to facilitate this, RDI hires will be required to commit to a five-year moratorium on pursuing joint appointments within the university. We believe this will not hamper hiring because many of our recruits will have been trained or hold appointments in interdisciplinary departments.

The governance structure of the Department will ensure that committees and the distribution of leadership positions reflects the interdisciplinary breadth and methodological diversity of the Department. For instance, while in many departments it is common for specific subfields to constitute hiring and promotion committees, RDI will borrow from the practices of Romance Languages and Literatures, which ensure that non-specialists are part of committees. To take one example, if we were to hire in the field of Global Asia, the search committee would include colleagues whose work primarily lies within African American or Latinx studies. Given

the gaps that we will have to fill in the Department's early years, this practice will initially be a matter of necessity. But, we would pursue it even if it were not. This will be the basis of more thoroughly engaging all of the Department's members in the various fields contained within the new unit.

Finally, RDI will be constituting an active external advisory board, described below (see section 8.1), whose members will be leading scholars who have been engaged in similar endeavors in recent years. This advisory board will reflect the breadth of scholarship that falls under RDI and will be an important sounding board for the Department's leadership by helping to identify promising candidates, providing advice on governing structures and sharing best practice on fostering synergies in an interdisciplinary department.

## **6. Teaching**

Currently, courses that are centered on race, diaspora, and indigeneity are offered throughout the University. The Center for Race, Politics, and Culture provides a clearinghouse for undergraduate courses offered by Center affiliates, as well as running the Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies major and minor. For graduate students seeking to specialize in these areas, there are no systematized courses of study at all. Students not majoring or minoring in CRES, as well as graduate students in the Divisions and Professional Schools, have to comb the time schedule every quarter to find classes and try to piece together a coherent curriculum. The creation of the Department of RDI will remedy this problem. RDI plans to offer a robust curriculum for undergraduate, Master's and PhD students, including one Core course and one Civilization sequence. Assuring regular and consistent provision of rigorous courses and a robust curriculum, these will benefit *all* students in the University. Some undergraduates will choose to major or minor in RDI, some graduate students to do Master's work through the proposed MAPH/MAPSS track, and some doctoral students to complete a certificate in RDI or write a thesis in the Department, but all will know where to start their search for courses that will deepen their knowledge of this crucial area. Students will, of course, continue to benefit from the courses on these topics taught through other disciplinary perspectives throughout the University.

### **6.1. Undergraduate**

#### **6.1.1. History and Current Situation**

The University has the honor of having been the locus of the first course in Negro history at any major Midwestern university, taught here in 1962. This course was made possible by the Black novelist (and PhD student in the Committee on Social Thought) Frank London Brown and the Union Leadership Program at the University. Over the decades since, departments in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Biological Sciences have offered individual courses in African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latinx studies, and in 1991, the University formalized the study of race in the College by establishing a major in African American Studies. This major was subsumed under the newly formed Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies program in 2009. Today, this undergraduate program is known as Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) and administered through the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture. Enrollments in the CRES major show a general trend of growth, especially in the last 5 years. From 1993 to 2017, CRES (and its predecessors) had relatively low enrollment, peaking in 2016 and 2017 with 7 students graduating with the major. Since then, graduating classes have had 10 or more CRES majors. Today, there are more than 30 CRES majors and nearly 10 minors, and we expect those numbers to grow as students continue to be increasingly interested in learning about how race, indigeneity, and diaspora have shaped the world.

Enrollments in CRES courses as well as those cross-listed with CRES also show a general trend of growth. In the academic year 2016-2017, enrollment across all CRES and cross-listed courses reached 2824, then 2712 in 2017-2018, 2742 the following year, and 3132 in 2019-2020. Enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year was even higher – 4012. Moreover, approximately half of the courses offered were either at or over capacity.

However, because the Center has no faculty of its own, it is unable to offer a consistent curriculum that would give continuity, shape and coherence to the CRES major and minor. The Center depends entirely on colleagues whose primary obligation is to serve their departments' programs. Recently this has led to a complete absence of faculty-taught courses with CRES parent numbers. *Since the Academic Year 2016-2017, all 35 courses with CRES parent numbers have been taught by graduate students and, most recently, Social Science Teaching Fellows.* While the quality of pedagogy is high, so is the rate of turnover for instructors. Students cannot rely on a regularity of course offerings around which to plan their studies. According to survey data gathered from University of Chicago students, *most undergraduate respondents were either very or somewhat dissatisfied with the regularity of courses offered.* During focus groups, some undergraduates characterized the CRES curriculum as “haphazard.” The absence of faculty-taught courses further means that College students focusing on the study of race at the University may not have the close contact with, and mentorship by, faculty essential to their experience in the College. This makes it difficult for them to find advisors for B.A. theses and ultimately to secure the letters of recommendation necessary for graduate or professional programs. Departmentalization will allow us to hire faculty to sustain a core set of courses as well as expand and enhance an already growing program.

#### **6.12. *The Major in RDI***

Immediately upon its founding, the new Department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity (RDI) will begin the work to implement the new RDI major. (Students currently enrolled as CRES majors or minors will, of course, be allowed to complete their programs as currently specified.) As CRES has grown in popularity, we have found that students often expect to specialize in a particular racial, ethnic, or geographic area of study—i.e. African American, Native American, Asian American, Latinx, MENA, etc. This aligns with the fairly common “track” structure offered in comparable departments at peer institutions, most notably the Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora at Tufts University, the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University, and the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. While this new Department is, of course, indebted to and informed by Black, Indigenous, Asian American, Chicano/Latinx, and Ethnic Studies—all with their own histories, genealogies, methodological innovations, and often separate departments and programs—we differ from them in our departure from localized, identitarian logics and our focus on global processes and structures. This, however, does not mean that questions of identity fall outside of our purview. The transition from Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) to Race, Diaspora, Indigeneity (RDI) is meant to foreground our attention to processes of social construction and fields of relation. In fact, it is in part because of the University community's eagerness to see the new Department encompass all of the aforementioned intellectual formations—evidenced by survey data—that we have decided to design a department more amenable to comparative, transnational, and even transhistorical frameworks of inquiry.

The new major will, furthermore, work closely with Chicago Studies to enable students to engage the city as a site for examining how race, diaspora, and indigeneity are articulated in



the local environment and specific histories. Capstone projects involving Chicago-area political and cultural organizations will be encouraged.

The new RDI major will include the *following requirements*:

The major will require 13 courses: 3 courses on critical concepts, including Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Racial Formations; 4 distribution requirements (1 in each of the following areas: theories, histories, structures, and cultures); 6 electives; and a BA Thesis or Capstone Senior Project. Students will have the option of combining RDI with any major in any division or school of the University.

*Critical Concepts*: These introductory courses are meant to introduce students to the central texts and key debates that inform the study of the Department's three core concepts. Courses on each term will be offered annually by a rotating group of faculty in the Department. After taking these courses, students will be able to identify the intellectual genealogies in which these concepts are situated and have a basic understanding of the central axes of debate.

-Indigeneity: In this course, students will consider Indigenous conceptions of peoplehood and the processes of settler colonialism as well as other forms of social formation. Taking a comparative and transnational approach, students will examine the triad of indigeneity, land, and sovereignty as they are refracted through specific political and cultural settings. Students will also consider contexts where the idea of indigeneity has been fraught and failed to translate.

-Diaspora: This course will introduce students to the concept of diaspora understood simultaneously as global processes of migration and dispersal and as political and cultural practices of meaning-making. Students will think through the distinctive and overlapping experiences of various diasporic communities—organized around race (i.e. African diaspora), regions (i.e. Asian diaspora), religion (i.e. Jewish diaspora), etc. From an exploration of these histories, students will explore diaspora as an alternative deterritorialized and transnational frame (in contradistinction to the nation-state).

-Racial Formations: The course introduces students to the idea of race as a concept and racialization as a process. Students will be introduced to the diversity of meanings the concept of "race" has held, the uses to which it has been put, and how it has been both contested and mobilized by those racialized. The "Racial Formations" course will, furthermore, include discussion of the history and relation of the terms race, caste, and ethnicity. The goal of the course is, in other words, to oblige students to question their everyday understandings of the term and acquire the tools needed to identify and analyze racial formations.

*Foundational Courses*: The Foundational courses are designed to expand student knowledge in the field of RDI and its diverse methodologies. Rather than set courses, these will be classes offered regularly by faculty, which will be designated to fulfill these requirements.

-Theories: These will include courses on concepts that deepen the training offered in the Critical Concepts course by highlighting specific intellectual traditions (such as Black Feminist Thought or Caribbean Studies) or taking up more specific conceptual anchors (such as intersectionality or decolonization).

-Practices: These will include courses on European expansion; the establishment of colonial empires, both settler and not; slavery and its aftermath; intellectual histories of key terms and the social science disciplines that created or furthered them; diasporas and other migrations; postcolonial societies; Civil Rights & Black Power Movements; Abolition; Anti-imperialism; Intersectional movements.

-Structures: These courses will focus on institutions and practices of domination. Topics to be covered include racial capitalism; race and space; comparative colonialisms; legal constructs and social dynamics of segregation; apartheid; science & technology; media.

-Aesthetics & Expressive Cultures: This will include courses on literary, visual, sonic, and other modes of expressive cultures, and highlight how cultural productions reshape and resignify our central conceptual anchors. Students will also develop analyses attuned to form, genre, circulation and reception of aesthetic materials.

If students did not take the new Race and Racial Ideologies Core for their Social Sciences requirement, they will be allowed to take that sequence for credit among their electives. Likewise, if they did not take the Colonizations Civilization sequence to fulfill their Civilizations requirement, they will be allowed to count it among their electives. Students may petition to count other potentially relevant Civilizations sequences (i.e. African, Latin American, Asian) for major credit (again, only if they did not take those sequences to fulfill their Civilizations requirement).

#### *Capstone:*

The major will offer three capstone tracks. The first would be a research project culminating in a traditional BA essay. The second would also entail research but the final product would be an intervention in public humanities, including podcasts, online exhibitions, documentary short films and long-form articles. Capstones could also involve internships accompanied by a paper that presents the history and goals of the organization in which the student has interned and analyzes and assesses its work. In all cases, capstone projects will be closely supervised by a member of the RDI faculty and the findings publicly presented before Commencement.

#### **6.13. *The Minor in RDI***

The RDI minor will consist of five courses: 3 courses on Critical Concepts, including Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Racial Formations; and 2 additional RDI courses. These courses may not be (1) double-counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements.

#### **6.14. *Colonizations Civilization Sequence***

The Colonizations sequence, currently run by the CSRPC, will shift to the new Department. This three-quarter sequence explores the dynamics of conquest, slavery,

colonialism, and their reciprocal relationships with concepts such as resistance, freedom, and independence, with an eye toward understanding their interlocking role in the making of the modern world. Colonizations I investigates slavery, colonization, and the making of the Atlantic world; Colonizations II covers modern European and Japanese colonialism in Asia and the Pacific; and Colonizations III discusses the dynamics and consequences of decolonization. There have typically been 4 to 5 sections of each course within the sequence since Academic Year 2016-2017, nearly all at or over capacity. The course is also taught in Spring in the Hong Kong program.

#### **6.1.5** *Race and Racial Ideologies Social Sciences Core Sequence*

Faculty affiliated with the CSRPC began work on a Race and Racial Ideologies Core for the Social Sciences Division and ran a very successful pilot in the fall quarter of 2020. By enabling undergraduates from across the University the opportunity to select this core class, the College is creating a curricular opportunity for students to develop their thinking while also advancing campus inclusion. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to grapple with taken-for-granted assumptions about the interconnectedness of race, history, culture, power, politics and privilege, and by doing so develop a greater sense of understanding and empathy that can be brought into their intercultural experiences, on and off campus.

The proposed Race and Racial Ideologies Core is separated into three distinct yet interconnected quarters that together build students' abilities to use theory and evidence to unearth and critique how race structures human experience in contemporary societies. Quarter 1 guides students through an overview of the history of race in biological, legal, social, political, and economic spheres of conceptualization. Quarter 2 enables students to delve into the aesthetics of race in many forms of cultural representations. Quarter 3 takes up the issue of how race continues to operate through contemporary systems.

Texts for this Core—classic, recovered and recent—will include theoretical, ethnographic, quantitative, literary, visual, and aural works. And because race is so central to our daily experiences, texts will also include journalistic and social media materials.

We intend to pursue development of the Race and Racial Ideologies Core and, once it is approved by the College, it will be administered by the new Department.

#### **6.2** *Graduate – Masters*

After consulting leadership in MAPSS and MAPH, the new Department plans to collaborate, starting three years after the founding of the Department, with the MA Program in the Humanities (MAPH) and the MA Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS) to offer a masters-level specialization in Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity (RDI) in the form of a track within and across each program. This track will augment the vitality of the existing MA programs by deepening the rigor of these areas of specialization.

According to MAPH administrators, the existing Race, Politics, and Culture track attracts few students. Yet the relatively low numbers of students officially registered in this track belies the popularity of studies related to race, diasporas, and/or indigeneity. An estimated quarter of MAPH applicants are interested in such topics and about 1/5 of master's theses each year are on topics in race/ethnic studies, and these numbers are increasing. The small number of Race,

Politics, and Culture cluster participants, therefore, does not indicate lack of interest, but instead it demonstrates applicants' and current students' perception of the lack of institutional investment in the study of race without a dedicated Department. MAPSS does not currently have a track, despite similarly having a significant number of prospective students and current students with aligning research interests. The establishment of RDI will inaugurate such a track within MAPSS.

Additionally, the new department will strengthen the University's commitment to interdisciplinary studies through its administrative role relative to these two programs, as it establishes interdivisional curricula, cohorts, and thesis or capstone project advising.

#### **6.2.1. Admissions**

Master's students will be admitted jointly to either MAPH or MAPSS *and* the newly formed department. Agreement between MAPH or MAPSS and the Department will be required for admission of these students to the RDI track. We propose that each program admit equal numbers of RDI track master's students in order to create an intellectual cluster— or a cohort within a cohort—across divisions. *To launch, we propose three (3) MAPH-RDI and three (3) MAPSS-RDI students.*

We view this collaboration as a pilot program that might serve to incubate new models of MA education that can be extended to other parts of the MAPSS and MAPH program in the future.

#### **6.2.2. Curriculum for the MA track**

Proposed courses for MA track:

-2 quarter sequence of Advanced theories of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity:

    Ideally co-taught by a Humanities and Social Science faculty

    First quarter: 3 week segments on central theoretical texts on each of Race, Diaspora, Indigeneity

    Second quarter: New work: Black & Indigenous Studies

-1 graduate-level course, ideally with their chosen advisor in the Department.

#### **6.3. Graduate: Plans for a Ph.D. program**

We will offer robust graduate training for students whose primary intellectual commitments center on an analysis of race, diaspora, and indigeneity. Former and current doctoral students have pointed to the lack of a department dedicated to race as a significant obstacle to their training. Without such a unit, the University has been unable to offer coherent curricular offerings across divisions for students seeking expertise in the study of race or indigeneity more broadly or working more precisely in Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous Studies. Moreover, we have lost opportunities to recruit doctoral students to our existing programs because students perceive the lack of a department as a sign the University is under-resourced in these areas, leading them to choose peer institutions with similar departments even when pursuing degrees in other disciplines. For these reasons, we believe that a Ph.D. program in RDI offering a robust curriculum of doctoral courses as well as workshops, proseminars, and expanded faculty expertise will make the University of Chicago attractive to doctoral students and the faculty who train them across the Divisions and Schools. The program we envisage is distinct from those that currently exist at our peer institutions; the innovativeness of the program

and the strength of the faculty will draw the strongest applicants to our program. (See Appendices G & H).

We also intend to found a Ph.D. program because advanced knowledge production centering race, diaspora, and indigeneity is urgent for remaking approaches to knowledge and the academy far beyond these fields themselves. Work in race, diaspora, and indigeneity is, by nature, transdisciplinary—its focus is on concepts that change in their meaning and operation over time rather than methods or field reproduction. Although there is much hiring the Department will need to do in its early years, our local faculty committed to joining the Department already speak to the kind of expertise a doctoral student in RDI will receive. For instance, a student could study Black politics through the lenses of political theory, literature, and history, blending disciplinary methods to arrive at a new and motile understanding of this concept when approached from a number of methodological vantage points. With the expertise of our current faculty coupled with the innovative hiring in the coming years, we envision a department that will be a cutting-edge place for doctoral students to study race, diaspora, and indigeneity as concepts that are both interrelated and in productive tension with each other. Approaching these concepts as correlated and co-constitutive is where race and indigenous studies have been moving for years. This Department, codifying the necessity of thinking about their interrelation, represents the most novel and generative way to study all three even as students may specialize in one. Students in RDI will be prepared to think about each of the Department’s constitutive concepts in interrelation no matter their ultimate specific research focus.

We intend to launch a Ph.D. program four years after the Department’s founding and will present the Social Sciences Division and the Council of the University Senate a detailed proposal at that time. We anticipate an initial cohort of five students, with the possibility of expansion in the future. This pacing will allow us to prioritize the significant hiring required to staff and advise a Ph.D. curriculum while also allowing these new colleagues to shape its structure and organization. As we move toward the formal establishment of the Ph.D. in year five of the department, we will set planning benchmarks that move us forward in the decision-making that this launch necessitates.

In preparation for this process, this Committee has surveyed existing students on their desire for graduate training in the field of RDI and has examined the Ph.D. programs peer institutions currently offer. (See Appendices G & H for our exploration of comparable programs.) Our research suggests three things. First, there is keen interest among current graduate students for interdisciplinary graduate training on race, diaspora and indigeneity. Second, many of our peers offer programs organized by models of African-American/Africana studies or Ethnic Studies. We believe that we can offer a unique Ph.D. program that will distinguish our department from comparative programs. Finally, the programs we surveyed show that students who graduate from these interdisciplinary programs are very successful in finding academic placement and pursuing adjacent careers in museums, foundations, etc.

#### ***6.4 Graduate: Ph.D. Certificate Program***

As an interim step to designing the Ph.D. program in dialogue with the new colleagues who will be joining the Department over five years, we propose launching a certificate program for Ph.D. students currently enrolled in other departments across the University. In addition to

allowing UChicago doctoral students both to benefit from RDI in a credentialed capacity and to build intellectual and social communities for those working on race, indigeneity, and diaspora across departments and divisions, the certificate program will also be crucial in implementing curricular structures eventually serving the doctoral program.

At the heart of the certificate is the RDI Proseminar. This course will be run and coordinated by a faculty member of RDI while engaging faculty from RDI and beyond the Department to introduce students to different methods, orientations, and approaches to work on race, diaspora, and indigeneity. Opening it to only doctoral students will allow Ph.D. students from across the University to build community among themselves and with RDI faculty while also grounding students in a shared conversation about methods, approaches, and objects bridging disciplinary structures. We envision this proseminar targeting doctoral students in their third year as they are formulating projects and research methodologies.

**6.4.1. *Ph.D. Certificate Requirements***

- 2 quarter sequence: Advanced theories of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity: See discussion of this above
- 2 graduate level courses
- 1 Prospectus Writing Workshop

## **7. Staffing & Administrative Structure**

**7.1. *Department Leadership***

The Department will have a Chair and a Deputy Chair each of whom will serve three-year terms (renewable). Ideally the Chair and Deputy Chair should be drawn from the SSD and the HD in order to balance leadership in the department.

**7.2. *Steering Committee***

The Department will have an elected Steering Committee composed of seven members (one undergraduate major, one RDI-track MAPH or MAPSS student, one PhD student, one staff member, at least one untenured faculty member, and two more faculty members). Students will serve for one year; faculty and staff for two. It will meet at least quarterly with the Chair and the Deputy Chair. Members will be expected to meet separately with their constituencies to report current issues to the Committee. When needed, the Steering Committee will meet in Executive Session (without the students and staff).

**7.3. *Director of Graduate Studies***

The DGS will be selected by the Chair and the Deputy Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee. The DGS will serve for three years.

**7.4. *Director of Undergraduate Studies***

The DUS will be selected by the Chair and the Deputy Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee. The DUS will serve for three years.

## **75 Staff**

The Department will require two dedicated staff members and one shared with the CSRPC. The two dedicated staff will be the Administrator for Chair and Faculty Affairs and the second a position in Student Affairs who will assure the smooth running of the graduate and undergraduate programs. The budget, development, and communications staff member will be shared with the CSRPC. This is a comparable level of staffing with other departments in the SSD and the HD.

## **8. Advisory and Evaluation Structure**

### **8.1. External Advisory Board**

Following the model of the Department of African American Studies at Columbia University, the Department will name a five-person Advisory Board of distinguished colleagues from other departments of race and Indigenous (or African American, Latinx, Chicano, or Asian American) Studies across the country. The Board will convene in Chicago every other year and meet with faculty, staff, and students to provide advice as the department develops. The first convening of this Board will be shortly after approval of the Department of RDI.

### **8.2. External Reviews**

At intervals to be determined by the Department in consultation with the Dean, the Department will be reviewed by a three-person external review committee, chosen in collaboration between the Dean of SSD and the Department.

## **9. The Relation of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture (CSRPC) to the New Department**

The Department will partner with the CSRPC to encourage collaboration and innovative research, teaching, and outreach on race, diaspora and indigeneity at the University of Chicago. Since its founding in 1996, the CSRPC has fulfilled many functions on campus. It has been responsible for conceptualizing, staffing, and sustaining a Core course (the Colonizations Civilization sequence); it has developed and sustained an undergraduate major and minor; it has provided a home and support for a number workshops and graduate working groups; it has both initiated conferences and lecture series and provided publicity and staffing for those conceptualized by others; it has applied for, won, and administered major grants, such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to establish a consortium of centers devoted to the study of race; it has managed grant cycles for faculty and graduate research support; it has incubated innovative residency programs not only for graduate students and faculty but also artists and practitioners. And, it has undertaken collaborative projects with our South Side neighbors. It is the institution to which colleagues and students seeking expertise on matters of race turn. This is far too much for one institution to carry.

With the advent of the RDI Department, that will change. The division of labor between the CSRPC and the Department will allow CSRPC to focus on conferences, workshops and other outward-facing programs, and residency programs and projects in partnership with surrounding

communities on the South Side. The Department will assume responsibility for all teaching and the hiring and promotion of faculty.

The CSRPC will continue to serve as a research institute devoted to the study of race that supports scholars across the University and also engages surrounding communities on the South Side. The Center will also continue to provide funding and other types of support for projects initiated by faculty affiliates, graduate students, undergraduates, artists-in-residence, and visiting fellows. The Center will be the home for conferences and workshops. And the Center will continue to offer student paper and project prizes.

The CSRPC will continue to host its two important and innovative residency programs—an artist-in-residency in collaboration with Arts + Public Life, and a practitioner fellows program conjointly with the Pozen Center Human Rights Lab. The artist-in-residency program, established in 2011, supports individual local artists whose work examines themes relevant to South Side communities and engages issues of race and ethnicity. Artists who participate in the program have demonstrated a history of rooting their practice in community engagement. The ten-month paid residency program provides space, materials and a stipend, eliminating barriers to participation. During this program, artists have access to rehearsal, performance and exhibition space at the Arts Incubator and Green Line Performing Arts Center in Washington Park, and access to the academic and research resources of the University. In 2021, the CSRPC and the Pozen Center Human Rights Lab launched a practitioners fellowship program. As part of the fellowship, practitioners complete a fellowship project of their own design that explores an aspect of the carceral system, curate their own series of public events, and participate in various community and university engagements throughout the year. 2021 also marked the inclusion of artist and practitioner fellows in the Centering Race Consortium’s larger network of University-supported artists, allowing UChicago artists-in-residence and fellows to collaborate with colleagues at Stanford, Yale, and Brown, as part of the CSRPC’s involvement in this Mellon-funded initiative.

The Center plays a crucial role in public-facing events of all kinds, ranging from regular graduate student working groups and workshops through speaker series to multi-day international conferences. Annually, the CSRPC organizes a major public lecture that features distinguished public intellectuals whose work promotes engaged thought and scholarship around the topics of race within the public sphere. Noted speakers have included Angela Y. Davis, Cornel West, Jose Antonio Vargas, and Vijay Prashad. The Center also supports a workshop, *Reproduction of Race and Racial Ideologies* (or the “Race Workshop”) and several working groups, including the *Mass Incarceration Workshop* (in collaboration with the Pozen Center), *Race and Pedagogy*, and a graduate-student only *Race Working Group*, which provides a context for graduate students to work intensively on a topic for a quarter or longer and also provides support for each other as they work on their dissertations. And, over the years, the CSRPC has sponsored any number of field-shaping conferences that gathered colleagues not only from across the city and the country, but around the world.

Participation and membership in the Center is broader than that of the Department. In addition to providing a locus for short-term visitors, artists, and practitioners, the CSRPC welcomes faculty whose research or teaching has caused them to develop an interest in race,



politics, and culture, even as they may not define that as their primary area of expertise. A colleague in the Medical School, for example, who is designing a study to be conducted on the South Side might workshop a proposal at the Center, in order to benefit from discussion with the colleagues there. Or the Court Theater’s dramaturg might collaborate on a quarter-long sequence of readings and other events around a future production in which issues of race are central.

The RDI Department will fulfill the functions of all departments; it will assume responsibility for all curricular matters, including undergraduate and graduate instruction and the Colonizations and Race and Racial Ideologies Core sequences. It will hire and promote faculty, thereby shaping the direction of research and teaching on campus. It will sponsor its own faculty seminar to assure the development of a shared language and direction. And the Department will assume responsibility for the “CRES talks,” an invited speaker series initiated by faculty to enhance course offerings.

The Department of RDI and the CSRPC will, of course, collaborate closely. Departmental members may decide to work with visiting artists, practitioners and scholars in curricular offerings. Faculty in the Department will also be prioritized for scholar-in-residence opportunities at the Center. The Department and the Center will share one staff position to ensure coordination on communication and programming initiatives, and the Center will collaborate frequently on programmatic initiatives. The Center, often in collaboration with the Department, will also offer dynamic programming and residencies that facilitate and foster interdisciplinary research, teaching, public debate and critical praxis.

In conclusion, we would like to note that this structure is the norm; all of our peer institutions have a department and one or more centers or research institutions. At Yale, for example, the Department of African American Studies co-exists with the Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration as well as the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. The Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative and the Center for African Studies at the University of Pennsylvania host conferences, faculty working groups, and research colloquia as well as organizing exhibitions and film series with the Department of Africana Studies, which provides the curriculum. At the University of Michigan, the division of labor is among a Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, an African Studies Center and a Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. (See Appendices J & K.)

## **10. Space**

The colleagues from across the country with whom we consulted over the past year were unanimous and insistent on the importance of adequate, welcoming, and central space for the new department. We concur entirely and hold that it is both crucial for our intellectual and pedagogic missions, and efficient for the new Department to be contiguous with the CSRPC. The Department will need: offices for twenty faculty; an office for the chair; a reception area with a desk for the Administrator for Chair and Faculty Affairs; a gathering space for students and an office for the Student Affairs staff member. We will be able to share some space with the CSRPC, although with the advent of the Department, more space will be needed, particularly if the CSRPC and the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality continue, as we very much

hope will be the case, to share lecture/seminar space, kitchens, and classrooms. The three units together will require a second, larger, lecture space; two additional classrooms (both seating thirty); and an expanded lounge.

## **11. Budget**

As with any new academic department approved by the Council of the University Senate, the Provost has confirmed that the University would provide funds to support the establishment of this new department, should approval be granted. We propose that the financial resources devoted to the department would be on par with other departments in the SSD, based on the number of faculty, other academic appointees, and other academic metrics (e.g., number of departmental students needing administrative support, etc.). When a doctoral program has been approved, doctoral slots will be provided in the new funding model.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A. History of this Initiative & Composition of the Department Formation Committees

Discussions among faculty for a department focused on the study of race date back, at least, to the founding of the Center for Race, Politics, and Culture in 1996. We note that the undergraduates' most recent demand for such a department was formulated by Ethnic Studies Now (in relation to UChicago United) in the 2017-2018 academic year and continues today. Additionally, a collective of Black graduate students circulated a letter in solidarity with the #MoreThanDiversity campaign and joined the call for departmentalization. Finally, in the summer of 2020, faculty mobilized in the #MoreThanDiversity campaign made founding an academic unit, with the capacity to hire and promote faculty, one of the four keystones of the campaign.

An Academic Unit Working Group, composed of interested faculty, was tasked by the #MoreThanDiversity campaign with determining the appropriate focus, form (department, school, or institute), and location (SSD, HD, outside the divisional structure), and writing a proposal that would ultimately be presented to the Council of the University Senate for approval by our colleagues. We invited three graduate students to join the Working Group. They participated in decision making and also served as RAs for the project. Their research, as well as the speaker series we designed to inform our work, has been funded by Provost Lee. And, in the fall quarter, four undergraduates contributed to shaping our thinking.

The Working Group's investigation, which began in fall 2020 and continued through spring 2021, was intensive and extensive, both on campus and among colleagues in the field throughout the United States. In the fall quarter, we organized three focus groups and asked members of the faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and staff to complete a survey to determine visions of, and demand for, a department dedicated to the study of race (See Appendices B & C). The co-chairs of the Working Group had conversations with all of the University's deans (see Appendix D) and the Working Group as a whole consulted one-on-one with approximately sixty University colleagues working and teaching in related areas. (See Appendix E). We also shared drafts of this proposal with two different groups of undergraduate constituents. The graduate student RAs researched the history of teaching on race, indigeneity and Asian and Latinx studies on this campus and beyond. We interviewed colleagues with experience in comparable units across the country and invited twelve of them for a virtual public speaker series paired with private discussions with the Working Group about how this research and teaching are best organized. (See Appendix F.) When it became clear that the only possible structure for such a unit at the University of Chicago at the current moment would be a department, and that the best home for such a department would be the Social Sciences Division, we met a number of times more with Dean Woodward. Because of the

interdisciplinarity of the new department despite its location within one division we have, throughout this process, continued to consult with colleagues in SSD, HD, and the Crown School who are not serving on the Working Group but who either plan to join the department or have a strong engagement in the field. Those who plan to join the department have all read, and had the opportunity to shape, the current proposal.

This process has revealed the urgency of this proposal. Internally, the overwhelming majority of our survey sample (646 respondents) indicated that they were “Extremely” or “Very Interested” in such a department. Even respondents who neither study race nor imagine themselves as direct stakeholders (i.e. prospective students, instructors, faculty members, affiliates, or staff) of this proposed department affirmed its value and potential to contribute to intellectual life at the University of Chicago. This endorsement was further reinforced by the 120 faculty and students who attended focus groups and voiced significant interest in the creation of this department. (See Appendices B & C for more detail.) The deans and other colleagues with whom we consulted were universally positive about the prospect of such a department. The Speaker Series was also well attended (between 35 and 60 participants at each talk). Reactions from beyond the University were, in some sense, even stronger. Colleagues expressed astonishment that the University of Chicago does not have an academic unit devoted to the study of race or indigeneity and universally argued that it is high time.

### **Internal Research**

From the onset of our efforts, the committee pledged to engage a range of stakeholders and to gather information for a well-researched proposal and a thoughtfully conceived department. The following appendices report the key findings from information gathered from persons internal to the University of Chicago (via surveys and focus groups) and externally (via series of invited speakers and research on relevant departmental models). Although the new department cannot satisfy all of the articulated requests, we have included this information to show our processes of information gathering. Perhaps more important, the level of participation from undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators in our university community, colleagues at other institutions, and community members beyond the campus, shows the deep and varied investments in the formation of the proposed department.

## APPENDIX B. Survey Data from Autumn 2020 Survey of Faculty, Graduate Students, Undergraduates and Staff at the University of Chicago

We began our research process with a survey of University of Chicago faculty, graduate students, undergraduates and staff. We developed the survey using Qualtrics and distributed it through University listservs (especially including those connected with race/ethnic studies Centers, e.g. the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture and the Center for Mexican Studies) as well as student affinity groups, e.g. the Organization of Black Students, UChicago United, etc.

We began circulating the survey on November 17th and closed it on December 5th. We collected a total of 920 responses. The final sample, however, filters out responses from alumni, community members, and those not affiliated with the University of Chicago, as well as partial responses and responses that were submitted in under 2 minutes. (We agreed that those submitted in under 2 minutes were likely not thoughtful submissions, since the average response time was around 7-10 minutes.) Below is a chart detailing the final sample:

Respondent Type	Number of Respondents
Undergraduates	61
Graduate Students	301
Faculty	172
Staff	112
<b>Final Sample</b>	<b>646</b>

The survey asked respondents a range of questions regarding their levels of satisfaction with current race/ethnic studies offerings at the University of Chicago as well as their desires for a new department.

## **APPENDIX C. Data from three Focus Groups held in Autumn 2020 with Faculty, Graduate Students, Undergraduates and Staff at the University of Chicago**

In order to hear directly from the University community what they want and need from a new department dedicated to the study of race, we held a series of focus groups (on November 16th, 18th, and 20th) with students, faculty, and staff. Our attention during these meetings was on: 1. articulating the current challenges of studying race here at the University, and 2. imagining possibilities for the formation of this new department—not debating whether such a department should exist here at the University. In other words, we took the need for such a department as a given without assuming to know exactly what the University community wants and needs from it. Each focus group was 2 hours long. We spent the first portion of the meeting organized into small groups based on position (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) so that participants could speak more candidly and expressly about their experiences. After reporting back as a full group, we divided into small groups again, but this time random and not organized by position. This was meant to allow participants to better understand the current situation of race studies from various vantage points and offer a more nuanced wish list for and conceptualization of the new department. It became clear that the University community wants the new department to be as capacious and inclusive as possible with regards to content, methodologies, and theoretical orientation(s). For instance, the University community holds that the new department be racially and ethnically inclusive as well as intersectional. The conviction that the department be organized around overarching questions, concepts and themes as opposed to identity-based affiliations, geographies, and historical periods was strongly expressed .

### **Current Challenges**

#### **Undergraduate Students**

- The Core Curriculum overrepresents the white male Western canon and lacks coverage of authors and thinkers of color who are historically excluded.
- The CRES major is less known compared to other majors (perhaps even ‘opaque’); one has to be “in the know” in order to engage.
- Many course descriptions include ‘race,’ but the actual course content isn’t substantive, comprehensive, or rigorous—treats race as an essentialist or universalist abstraction without attention to the distinctions between various racial and ethnic formations.
- Quick turnover of faculty and graduate students leads to inconsistency of courses; coursework feels ‘haphazard’ (true for graduate education students as well).
- University invests heavily in areas of study like Economics, STEM, and Classics (even offers free copies of *The Odyssey*) but doesn’t invest in the study of race. This sends a clear message about the University’s priorities.

## Graduate Students

- General shock that the University doesn't already have a department or institute dedicated to the study of race and ethnicity because peer institutions have these departments.
- Lack of coursework (course sequence, core course, or set of courses and foundational texts) on race and ethnicity means that one's peers and colleagues are ill-equipped to be helpful interlocutors. This leads to students feeling as though they're working alone rather than in an intellectual community.
- While there's a lack of coursework and resources for people studying Black racial formations, there seems to be even fewer resources for people studying other racial and ethnic formations. For instance, there's a serious lack of race and ethnic studies even within area studies like East Asian Languages and Civilizations.
- The few faculty members who specialize in race and ethnicity are overburdened; their courses are often over-enrolled, which indicates clear demand for more coursework, resources, and faculty.
- Students must explore beyond their own departments and disciplines for coursework on race and ethnicity but are often unable to take those courses because: 1. courses are over-enrolled and 2. some courses are open only to that department's students. Moreover, students must cobble together their own programs of study (i.e. workshop circuit, external committee members, etc.).
- The CSRPC currently operates as a de facto department but without sufficient funding and powers; the Center could do its work more effectively if there was a department with which to share the labor.
- Resources for studying race and ethnicity are disparate and disjointed (even 'haphazard'). One must perform a great deal of labor to locate faculty, curricula, and programming. A department would be able to perform this labor and, thus, become a centralized hub.

## Faculty

- There's a general sense that the University doesn't support the study of race and ethnicity, evidenced by the CSRPC being underfunded.
- The overrepresentation of the white male Western canon and the lack of race and ethnicity in current curricula leave faculty (including Postdoctoral Fellows) feeling marked and politicized when they try to include race on syllabi; the study of race is then perceived as merely linked to personal interests.
- Race and ethnicity are considered peripheral, not central, to one's work and discipline.
- Junior faculty who specialize in race and ethnicity must teach their senior colleagues how to read and assess their work for the purposes of review and promotion.
- Faculty research on race is often dismissed as merely "politicized" or "faddish."
- The University's divisional structure makes it difficult to move across disciplines and divisions.
- There's currently a critical mass of faculty studying race but a clear lack of institutional support.
- The University currently has no library specialist on race and ethnicity.

## Wish List for the New Department

- Key terms for department name and description: Race, Ethnicity, (Settler) Colonialism, Diaspora, Migration, Indigeneity, Critical Methodology, Epistemology, Social Inquiry
- Coursework
  - Core course (or set of courses) for both undergraduates and graduate students to establish shared language (potential model: Advanced Theories of Gender and Sexuality); this course should be available to students outside of the department.
  - Coursework on how race is studied in different disciplines (Race Across the Disciplines).
  - Coursework and programming organized around Chicago Studies (potential model: Race and Class in Los Angeles, which is a required course for all undergraduates at USC).
  - Coursework that addresses the history of the study of race here at the University (as a counterpoint to the Chicago School of Sociology).
  - Coursework on the history of coalitions.
  - Coursework on race and ethnicity as they relate to Arts & Culture, History & Politics, Science & Technology, Health & Medicine, Law & Justice, Business & Economics, etc. (coursework that is truly interdisciplinary).
  - More coursework in general, especially that which is attached to graduate pedagogical training, Teaching Fellowships, and Postdoctoral Fellowships.
  - Year-long colloquia (e.g. Systems I & II in Anthropology).
  - Joint undergraduate majors, MA, graduate certificates, PhD, and joint PhD.
  - Race Core for undergraduates. Relatedly, since the Core is such a cornerstone of the College, might it be replicated at the graduate level in/through this new department?
  - Language instruction (e.g. creole languages).
- Departmental Orientation(s)
  - Inclusion of African American, Asian American, Latinx, Indigenous Studies, etc.
  - Inclusion of whiteness as a racial formation.
  - Intersectional perspective: race, gender, sexuality, and class (e.g. Black Feminism, Women of Color Feminism, etc.).
  - Global perspective: balance US framing of racial categories with transnational approaches.
  - Organized around overarching questions/challenges/themes/concepts, not identitarian affiliations or geography; academic tracks based on methodology and/or discipline.
  - Additional approaches: Comparative, Historical, Materialist, etc.
  - Partnerships with the Human Rights Center, Center for Civic Engagement, Court Theatre, Smart Art Museum, Graham School, hospital, etc.
  - Coalition within the department to prevent factions and silos; foster community both inside and outside of the department.



## **APPENDIX D. List of Deans Consulted**

Dean Kate Baicker (Harris)

Dean John Boyer (College)

Dean Deborah Gorman-Smith (Crown School)

Dean Thomas Miles (Law School)

Dean David Nirenberg (Divinity)

Dean Angela Olinto (PSD)

Dean Kenneth Polonsky (BSD)

Dean Madhav Rajan (Booth)

Dean Anne Robertson (HD)

Dean Amanda Woodward (SSD)

## **APPENDIX E. List of University of Chicago Faculty Consulted**

Leora Auslander (History); Sophia Azeb (English); Jessica Baker (Music); Joyce Bell (Sociology); Matthew Briones (History); Sean Brotherton (Anthropology); Adrienne Brown (English); Julie Chu (Anthropology); Cathy Cohen (Political Science); Michael Dawson (Political Science); Eve Ewing (Crown); Ally Field (CMS); Brodie Fischer (History); René Flores (Sociology); Anton Ford (Philosophy); Rachel Galvin (English & Comp Lit); Larissa Garcia (RLL); Marco Garrido (Sociology); Theaster Gates (DOVA, Harris); Adom Getachew (Political Science); Julian Go (Sociology); Adam Green (History); Ramón Gutiérrez (History); Kimberly Kay Hoang (Sociology); Mitchell Jackson (English); Travis Jackson (Music); Destin Jenkins (History); Ryan Jobson (Anthropology); Rashauna Johnson (History); Sarah Johnson (English); Waldo Johnson (SSA); Damon Jones (Harris); Kara Keeling (CMS); Micere Keels (HD); Emilio Kouri (History); Matthew Kruer (History); Darryl Li (Anthropology); Agnes Lugo-Ortiz (RLL); Omar McRoberts (Sociology); Reuben Miller (Crown); Teresa Montoya (Anthropology); Salikoko Mufweme (Linguistics); David Nirenberg (Social Thought, History, Divinity); Noemie Ndiaye (English); Natacha Nsabimana (Anthropology); Stephan Palmié (Anthropology); Kaneesha Parsard (English); Robert Pippen (Social Thought); Tina Post (English); Patricia Posey (Anthropology); Elizabeth Reese (Law); Danielle Roper (RLL); Salomé Skivrsky (CMS); C. Riley Snorton (English, CSGS); Margaret Beale Spencer (Human Development); Jackie Stewart (CMS); Kathryn Takabvirwa (Anthropology); Chris Taylor (English); Robert Vargas (Sociology); Kenneth Warren (English).

## APPENDIX F. Speaker Series Summary

The committee invited twelve esteemed scholars from outside of the University of Chicago for a series of public talks and closed committee discussions. Funded by the Provost, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture and promoted by the Dean of the Social Sciences Division, each session engaged the broader UChicago community with varied contours of studies of race, ethnicity and indigeneity in each scholar's intellectual biography and at the institutions with which they are affiliated. Each one-hour session was moderated by a committee member and staged a conversation between two scholars brought together because of their shared thematic expertise relevant to this proposal. Following the virtual public discussions, the speakers joined the committee for a closed conversation in which the speakers provided greater detail and advice related to departmentalization.

The committee took note of some recurrent insights that our guests shared. It was clear that each university, including the University of Chicago, has its own set of considerations that will shape the process of departmentalization and the department itself. Additionally, the new department must have clarity of intellectual vision and scope. Administrative considerations related to structure, funding, and staffing are tantamount to the intellectual objectives of the new department. Therefore, it is imperative that the university invest the necessary material resources to the proposed department. Our guests also foreshadowed various trajectories and phases in the growth of a new department. Some specific lessons included the importance of the local specificity of the department. For instance, Indigenous Studies at UChicago will take into account the urban, multinational, and multilingual Indigenous American population. And given the prevalence of peer institutions where both a center and department are present, the precedent has been set for fruitful coexistence. In addition to the valuable insights the speaker series elicited, it also garnered support for our efforts at UChicago among a group of academics in various fields across the country and at the University of Alberta in Canada. Many of these scholars have been involved in establishing and growing departments and are eager to have UChicago join their ranks.

Speakers/Theme Breakdown:

### Global Black Studies

Edmund T. Gordon

Associate Professor and founding chair of African and African Diaspora Studies & Vice Provost for Diversity  
University of Texas at Austin

Jafari S. Allen

Director of the Africana Studies Program & Associate Professor of Anthropology  
University of Miami

### Indigenous Studies

Kimberly TallBear  
Associate Professor, Faculty of Native Studies  
University of Alberta

Clint Carroll  
Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies  
University of Colorado Boulder

Black Studies at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Beverly Guy Sheftall  
Founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies  
Spelman College

Joshua Myers  
Associate Professor of Africana Studies in the Department of Afro-American Studies  
Howard University

Center and Department Relations

Tricia Rose  
Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Special Initiatives  
Brown University

Farah Jasmine Griffin  
Chair of African-American & African Diaspora Studies; Director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies and the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies  
Columbia University

Asian Diaspora Studies

Nitasha Sharma  
Associate Professor of African American Studies and Asian American Studies; Director of Graduate Studies, Department of African American Studies; Director, Asian American Studies Program; Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence  
Northwestern University

Victor Bascara  
Associate Professor, Department of Asian American Studies  
University of California-Los Angeles

Critical University Studies

Nick Mitchell  
Associate Professor Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Program, Feminist Studies Department  
University of California-Santa Cruz

Rod Ferguson  
Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and American Studies  
Yale University

## **APPENDIX G. Comparable Departments at other Universities—Summary**

Because RDI follows the intellectual genealogies of race and ethnic studies while differing in conceptualization and organization, we surveyed a group of institutions that fit one or more of the following categories: peers (e.g. Yale University); early leaders in departmentalization of race and ethnic studies (e.g. University of California-Berkeley); regional neighbors (e.g. Northwestern); and/or programs organized by conceptual categories similar to RDI (e.g. Tufts). We gathered information from their websites and liaised with administrators in the respective departments to determine: (1) what departmental formations of studies of race are present, (2) where the departments are located in the respective universities, (3) how the curriculum is organized, (4) how faculty appointments are organized (5) degrees offered, (6) date established, (7) if there is an affiliated center, (8) the academic mission, and (9) job placement rates of graduates. Below is a summary of the most relevant findings from this search.

Universities surveyed: Tufts University; University of Michigan, Ann-Arbor; University of Texas at Austin; University of Southern California; Harvard University; New York University; Yale University; University of Pennsylvania; University of California, Berkeley; Brown University; and Northwestern University.

### Structures

Standalone departments dedicated to the study of race with African American and African Studies are the most common. However, at several institutions, fields broadly termed ethnic studies (African American Studies, Latinx Studies, Native American/Indigenous Studies, Asian American Studies, etc.) are located within departments of American Studies (i.e. Michigan) or clustered programs like Social & Cultural Analysis at NYU or Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora at Tufts. The cluster structure is mostly the case on the undergraduate level; students are able to have majors and/or minors in the respective fields and there are no graduate programs. Michigan and NYU only offer PhDs in American Studies and not in any of the other programs under the department umbrella. In many cases the departments also house other critical/marked categories of study such as disability studies or colonialisms. It should be noted that American Studies and African American Studies are often separate departments, and that at Berkeley, African American Studies is a separate department from Ethnic Studies. Most PhD programs in African American Studies are standalone programs; few certificates and masters programs are offered. Yale has a joint PhD program and Harvard has a de facto joint program.

### Location

These programs occupy various locations within their respective institutions: typically in the liberal arts colleges, humanities divisions, and to a lesser extent social sciences divisions or the graduate schools in these institutions.

### Faculty

**Mostly Full-Line:** UMich (American Culture), UT Austin, UC Berkeley, NYU

**Mostly Joint Appointments:** UMich (Af-Am), USC, Harvard, Yale, UPenn, Northwestern

**Fairly Equal Distribution:** Tufts and Brown

### Curriculum

**Core Courses (in addition to distribution requirements):** UMich (Af-Am), UT Austin, Yale, USC (PhD), UC Berkeley (Af-Am), UPenn, Brown, and Northwestern

**Tracks (often Africana, Asian American, Latinx, Indigenous, etc.):** Tufts, UMich (American Culture), USC, Harvard (also core requirements), NYU, and UC Berkeley (Ethnic Studies)

### Job Placement

Patterns of job placement among PhD graduates of African American, American, and Race and Ethnic Studies programs at peer institutions (i.e. Harvard, Yale, Northwestern, UC Berkeley, and Brown) indicate the versatility of interdisciplinary degrees. Graduates of these programs have gone on to pursue a variety of career paths—including, for example, tenure track positions at private and public institutions (in African American, American, Ethnic, and Critical Race Studies programs, as well as traditional disciplines, such as Anthropology, English, Political Science, History, Sociology, etc.), non-profit work, and careers in museum curation, library science, political organizing, and public law. Since approaches to tracking job placement and the willingness to share information about student trajectories (e.g. retention rates) differ across programs, it is difficult to subject patterns of job placement to a statistical analysis. Still, the data gathered suggest that interdisciplinary, race studies degrees invite promising and wide-ranging employment prospects.

## APPENDIX H. Comparable Departments at other Universities: Tabular format

Table A: Departmental Structure and General Information

University	Department(s) (year established)	Structure and/or Curriculum	Faculty
Brown University	Department of Africana Studies (est. 2001)	<p>In order to complete the concentration, <b>undergraduate students</b> must take 9 Africana courses, including 3 required courses: An Introduction to Africana Studies, Junior Seminar, and Knowledge, Texts, and Methodology. 6 of the 9 courses must be taught by Africana core faculty.</p> <p>All <b>doctoral students</b> must take the year-long seminars, Theories and Histories of Africana Studies, as well as Methods of Africana Studies. Doctoral students must also select an area of emphasis: 1) History, Politics, and Theory, 2) Literary, Expressive and Performance Cultures, or 3) Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality.</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA, PhD</p> <p>*Please note Brown has a Department of American Studies wherein an Ethnic Studies concentration is located</p>	13 core faculty members; about half are jointly appointed. There are also 20 affiliated faculty members
Harvard University	Department of African and African American Studies (est. 1969)	<p>Undergraduate concentrations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-African Studies</li> <li>-African American Studies</li> </ul> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA, PhD</p>	Most faculty (47) are jointly appointed, while there are only 3 full-line faculty



New York University	Department of Social and Cultural Analysis (est.2005)	<p>Programs/Tracks:          -Africana Studies          -American Studies          -Latino Studies          -Asian/Pacific/AmericanStudies          -Metropolitan Studies          -Social and CulturalAnalysis          -Gender and SexualityStudies</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b>          BAs in:          -Africana Studies          -American Studies          -Asian/Pacific/AmericanStudies          -Gender and SexualityStudies          -Latinx Studies          -Metropolitan Studies          -Social and CulturalAnalysis          MAs in          -Africana Studies          -American Studies          -Social and CulturalAnalysis          PhD in          American Studies only</p>	Faculty have appointments that are distributed throughout the various programs (Latinx, Africana, American, etc.) within the department.
Northwestern University	Department of African American Studies (est. 1972)	<p>To complete the major, <b>undergraduate students</b> must take 12 courses from within the Department as well as 5 related courses outside of the Department. The 12 courses in the Department include 5 Core Courses, 6 Elective Courses, and 1 Senior Course. The Department offers 8 Core Courses (students can select any 5):          -Introduction to AfricanAmerican Studies          -Survey of African American Literature          -Literatures of the BlackWorld          -Introduction to AfricanAmerican History 1 or 2          -History of the BlackWorld          -Comparative Race andEthnic Studies          -Introduction to Black Social and Political Life          -Black Diaspora andTransnationality</p>	13 core faculty members, 5 (primarily junior faculty) are singularly appointed to the Department of African American Studies. There are also 29 affiliated faculty members.

		<p><b>Doctoral students</b> must take a total of 18 courses, including 6 core courses, 4 track courses, 4 courses within one's chosen discipline of specialization, 3 elective courses, and 1 research methods course. The 6 Core Courses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Research Seminar in Black Studies</li> <li>-Theorizing Black Genders and Sexualities</li> <li>-Theorizing Blackness and Diaspora</li> <li>-Black Expressive Arts</li> <li>-Black Historiography</li> <li>-Black Social and Political Thought</li> </ul> <p>To fulfill the 4 course track requirement, doctoral students have 3 tracks to choose from: 1) Expressive Arts and Cultural Studies, 2) Histories, and 3) Politics, Society, and Culture. To fulfill the specialization requirement, students may choose from a wide array of disciplines, including Anthropology, English, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, Theatre, etc.</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA, undergraduate minor, graduate certificate, PhD</p>	
Tufts University	Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora (est. 2019)	<p>Race Colonialism and Diaspora is divided into six (6) tracks with their own faculty directors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Africana Studies (major &amp; minor)</li> <li>-American Studies (major)</li> <li>-Asian American Studies (minor)</li> <li>-Colonialism Studies (minor)</li> <li>-Latino Studies (minor)</li> <li>-Native American and Indigenous Studies (minor)</li> </ul> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minors in the tracks listed above; no graduate degrees</p>	<p>Combination of full-line faculty (associate (3), assistant (2), senior lecturer (1)); part-time lecturers (2), and secondarily appointed faculty (full (2), associate (2), assistant (3).) RCD has dozens of "Collaborating Faculty," across many departments at Tufts who cross-list classes, help plan programming, and advise and mentor our students. Faculty are listed by tracks on the website.</p>

<p>University of California, Berkeley</p>	<p>Department of Ethnic Studies(est. 1969)</p> <hr/> <p>Department of African American Studies(est. 1970)</p>	<p>The department of EthnicStudies is organized by areas of study.</p> <p><b>Undergraduate students</b>major in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, Native American Studies, orComparative Ethnic Studies.</p> <p><b>Doctoral students</b> may select any of these areas ofstudy as a core subfield.          Doctoral students may also “pursue a ‘Designated Emphasis’ in such areas asCritical Theory, Film Studies, Indigenous Language Revitalization, New Media, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality.”</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA andminor, PhD</p> <p>To declare the major, <b>undergraduates</b> in the Department of African American Studies must take courses Africa: History and Culture as well as African AmericanLife and Culture in the United States (2 semesters). Once in the major, students must take4 upper division core classes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Black Intellectual Thought</li> <li>2. Colonialism, Slavery, andAfrican Life before 1865,</li> <li>3. Interdisciplinary Research Methods, and 4.Senior Seminar. In consultation with the department’s academic advisor, students must also devise an area of concentration by taking 4 appropriate upper division electives.</li> </ol> <p><b>Doctoral students</b> maypursue a “Designated Emphasis” in Critical Theory, Film Studies, New Media, or Women,Gender, and Sexuality.</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minor, PhD</p>	<p>Most faculty are singularly appointed to the Department of Ethnic Studies</p> <p>The Department of African American Studieshas 13 core faculty; most faculty are singularly appointed to the Department. There are also 6 affiliated faculty members.</p>
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University of Michigan	Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (est. 1970)	<p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minor; African American &amp; Diasporic Studies Graduate Certificate or African Studies certificate. Students can do a Master's in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in African Studies.</p>	<p>The Department of Afroamerican and African Studies has faculty of varying ranks. The vast majority of faculty also have appointments in other departments but not all. There are numerous associates and affiliates of department.</p>
	<p>Department of American Culture (est. 2012)</p>	<p>The Department of American Culture houses several ethnic studies tracks.  Majors and minors are in  -Arab and Muslim American Studies Minor  -Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies Minor  -Latina/Latino Studies Major and Minor.  -Native American Studies Minor.  -Ethnic Studies Sub-Major (The Ethnic Studies sub-major allows for students to work within existing Ethnic Studies programs, but also allows for cross-cutting and comparative plans of study. This sub-major builds on the existing American Culture major, but identifies a clear path within it modeled on the existing Ethnic Studies minors.  Like the existing Ethnic Studies minors, students begin with an "Intro" course, which introduces key terms, concepts, and disciplinary approaches. Students are then asked to choose four additional electives from rich offerings in Ethnic Studies</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BAs and undergraduate minors; PhD in American Culture only</p>	<p>The Department of American Culture has numerous faculty of all ranks. Most are listed as American Culture department with fields of specialization listed by track; each program track has a chair  Faculty Associates are instructional faculty and professionals across the University with an informal connection to the Department of American Culture. Faculty Associates occasionally list courses with the Department and serve on departmental administrative or dissertation committees</p>

<p>University of Pennsylvania</p>	<p>Department of Africana Studies(est. 2012)</p>	<p>The <b>undergraduatemajor</b> requires 12 courses: 2 core (Introduction to AfricanaStudies and Introductionto Africa), 4 category requirements (1 humanities, 1 social science, 1 methodology, 1 upper level research course), 4 concentration (African, African American, or African Diaspora), 1 elective, and1 capstone paper.</p> <p>All <b>doctoral students</b> must complete 14 courses, including five Core and two methodology courses.The 5 Core courses are: Proseminar in Africana Studies (2 semesters), Introduction to African and African Diaspora Thought, Cultural and Literary Theory of Africa and the African Diaspora, and Political Economy and Social History of Africa and the African Diaspora.</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA, undergraduate minor, graduate certificate, PhD,Joint PhD</p>	<p>Most professors are jointly appointed, although some (especially junior faculty) have full lines in Africana.</p>
<p>University of Southern California</p>	<p>Department of American Studies and Ethnicity(est. 1992)</p>	<p>Department of American Studies and Ethnicity offers a “comparative andinterethnic program that takes as its focus a region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Los Angeles, California,and the West - marked by challenging social and cultural changes” that is organized by research clusters:</li> <li>-Indigeneity andDecolonization</li> <li>-Race and Sexuality</li> <li>-Transpacific Studies</li> <li>-Africana ResearchCluster</li> <li>-Hemispheric Americas: Race, Power, and Space (HARPS)</li> <li>-Creativity, Theory,Politics</li> </ul> <p><b>Undergraduate Majors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-American PopularCulture</li> <li>-American Studies &amp;Ethnicity</li> <li>-African American Studies</li> <li>-Asian American Studies</li> <li>-Chicano/Latino StudiesMinors:</li> <li>-American Studies &amp;Ethnicity</li> <li>-American PopularCulture</li> <li>-Jewish American Studies</li> <li>-Native American Studies</li> </ul> <p><b>Degrees offered: BA,Masters, PhD</b></p>	<p>Most faculty (24) are jointly appointed. There are 8 full-line faculty members in the department. 38 faculty members from other departments as affiliated.</p>

<p>University of Texas at Austin</p>	<p>Department of American Studies(circa 1941)</p> <hr/> <p>African and African Diaspora StudiesDepartment (est. 2010)</p> <hr/> <p>Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Department (est. 2014)</p>	<p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minor, PhD in American Studies</p> <hr/> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minor AADS; PhD; the undergraduate major in Race, Indigeneity, and Migration is housed in AADS with faculty and courses from AADS, Asian American studies, Latina/o studies, LGBTQ studies, Native American and Indigenous studies and Women and Gender studies. Students pursuing the RIM major will gain multicultural and comparative knowledge around issues of race, gender, sexuality, indigeneity and global migration at the sites of law, policy, economics, cultural spheres and public education.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA and undergraduate minor; PhD in Mexican American/Latino/a Studies</p> <p>*Please note that the Center for Asian American Studies houses undergraduate majors and minors in Asian American Studies and graduate certificate</p>	<p>American Studies: 12 core faculty varying ranks; mostly associate level; few have dual appointments; numerous affiliated faculty</p> <hr/> <p>AADS: Faculty of varying ranks. Few have dual appointments; several affiliated faculty</p> <hr/> <p>MALS: Professors (3); associate (6); assistant (3); lecturers (3) all are full time in the department; numerous courtesy appointments</p>
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<p>Yale University</p>	<p>Department of African American Studies(est. 1969)</p> <hr/> <p>Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration(est. 1998)</p>	<p>The <b>undergraduate major</b> in African American Studies requires twelve terms of course work including a year- long history sequence, one course in literature relevant to African American Studies, one course in the social sciences relevant to African American Studies, the senior colloquium, and the senior essay. All courses should be taught by African American Studies faculty members. “These courses examine ideas and problems that may originate in many fields but that have a common concern - the black experience.”</p> <p>All <b>doctoral students</b> must take five AFAM courses, including two core courses: Theorizing Racial Formations (during their first year of graduate study) and Dissertation Prospectus Workshop (during their third year). Of the remaining three courses, one must be a history course, one must be a social science course, and one must be a course in literature or culture.</p> <p><b>Degrees offered:</b> BA, Joint PhD</p> <hr/> <p>Students typically take an introduction to ethnicity, race, and migration studies course and they are required to take a junior seminar in comparative ethnic studies. Rather than following predetermined tracks, students develop their own area of concentration (6 courses) in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.</p> <p><b>Degree offered:</b> BA in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration only</p>	<p>All professors in African American Studies are jointly appointed</p> <hr/> <p>All professors in ERM are jointly appointed, with the highest concentration coming from American Studies.</p>
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**Table B: PhD Programs at Peer Institutions**

University	Department(s)	PhD program(s)
Brown University	Department of Africana Studies	<p>PhD Africana Studies (standalone)</p> <p>All doctoral students must take the year-long seminars Theories and Histories of Africana Studies as well as Methods of Africana Studies.</p> <p>Doctoral students must also select an area of emphasis: 1) History, Politics, and Theory, 2) Literary, Expressive and Performance Cultures, or 3) Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality.</p>
Harvard University	Department of African and African American Studies	PhD in African and African American Studies; this is a standalone PhD but appears to be a de facto joint degree requiring students to take 7 courses in a primary field.
New York University	Department of Social and Cultural Analysis	PhD in American Studies only; not other programs
Northwestern University	Department of African American Studies	PhD in African American Studies (standalone); graduate certificate also offered
Tufts University	Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora	No PhD
University of California-Berkeley	Department of Ethnic Studies	<p>PhD in Ethnic Studies (standalone);</p> <p>Doctoral students may select any of the areas of the following areas of study Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, Native American Studies, or Comparative</p>



	Department of African American Studies	<p>Ethnic Studies as a core subfield. Doctoral students may also pursue a “Designated Emphasis” in such areas as Critical Theory; Film Studies; Indigenous Language Revitalization; New Media; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality.</p> <p>PhD in African American Studies (standalone);</p> <p>Doctoral students may pursue a “Designated Emphasis” in Critical Theory; Film Studies; New Media; or Women, Gender, and Sexuality.</p>
University of Michigan	<p>Department of Afroamerican and African Studies</p> <p>Department of American Culture</p>	<p>No PhD in Afroamerican and African Studies</p> <p>PhD in American Culture (standalone)</p>
University of Pennsylvania	Department of Africana Studies	<p>PhD in Africana Studies (standalone and joint PhD offered)</p> <p>All doctoral students must complete 14 courses, including five Core and two methodology courses. The 5 Core courses are: Proseminar in Africana Studies (2 semesters), Introduction to Africa and African Diaspora Thought, Cultural and Literary Theory of Africa and the African Diaspora, and Political Economy and Social History of Africa and the African Diaspora.</p>
University of Southern California	Department of American Studies and Ethnicity	<p>PhD in American Studies and Ethnicity (standalone)</p> <p>Organized in research clusters: Indigeneity and Decolonization; Race and Sexuality; Black Diasporas and Transpacific Studies</p>

<p>University of Texas at Austin</p>	<p>Department of American Studies</p> <p>African and African Diaspora Studies Department (est. 2010)</p> <p>Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Department</p>	<p>PhD American Studies (standalone)</p> <p>PhD African and African Diaspora Studies (standalone)</p> <p>PhD Mexican American and Latino/a Studies (standalone)</p>
<p>Yale University</p>	<p>Department of African American Studies</p> <p>Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration</p>	<p>Joint PhD</p> <p>African American Studies offers a combined Ph.D. in conjunction with several other departments and programs. Departments and programs which currently offer a combined Ph.D. with African American Studies are: American Studies, Anthropology; English; Film and Media Studies; French; History; History of Art; Music; Political Science; Psychology; Religious Studies; Sociology; Spanish and Portuguese; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.</p> <p>An area of concentration in African American Studies may take the form of a single area study or a comparative area study: e.g., Caribbean or African American literature, a comparison of African American literature in a combined degree with the Department of English; an investigation of the significance of the presence of African cultures in the new World, either in the Caribbean or in Latin and/or South America in a combined degree with the Spanish and Portuguese department. An area of concentration may also follow the fields of study already established within a single discipline, e.g., race/minority/ethnic studies in a combined degree with Sociology. An area of concentration must either be a field of study offered by a</p>

		<p>department or fall within the rubric of such a field.</p> <p>Students admitted to the Combined Ph.D. program will be supervised by the African American Studies Department and the respective joint department or program. A student's academic program will be decided in consultation with an advisor, the director of graduate studies of African American Studies, and the director of graduate studies of the joint department or program and must be approved by all three.</p> <hr/> <p>No PhD in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration</p>
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**Table C: Centers and Institutes Affiliated with Departments at Peer institutions**

University	Departments/Programs	Centers/Institutes & Programs
Brown University	Department of Africana Studies	<p><b>Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (CSREA):</b> Art Exhibitions, Teach-Ins, Centering Race Consortium (CRC) Symposia, CSREA Fellows Program, Signature Series (lectures, conversations, roundtables, workshops, seminars, etc.), Humanities Lab, Intercollegiate Collaborative Teaching Program, etc.</p> <p><b>Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative:</b> Coursework (e.g. Nahuatl for Beginners and Indigenous Resurgence: Roots, Reclamations, and Relations), Lecture Series, Art Nights, Cultural Workshops, Conferences (e.g. Relationships, Reciprocity, and Responsibilities: Indigenous Studies in Archives and Beyond), Youth Ambassadors for Land Conservation Program with the Center for Native American Youth, Tracking COVID-19 in Indigenous Peru, The Database of Indigenous Slavery in the Americas (DISA), etc.</p> <p><b>Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice:</b> Research clusters: Human Trafficking, Race, Medicine and Social Justice, Freedom Archive, Race, Slavery, Colonialism and Capitalism, Historical Injustice and Democracy, Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America; Public Humanities Projects: Global Curatorial Project, Slave Trade Film Project, Exhibitions; Seminar series, arts initiatives, public engagement, annual reports.</p>

Harvard University	Department of African and African American Studies	<p><b>Hutchins Center for African and African American Research:</b> W. E. B. DuBois Research Institute, Hiphop Archive &amp; Research Institute, Afro-Latin American Institute, Image of the Black Archive &amp; Library, Project on Race &amp; Gender in Science &amp; Medicine, History Design Studio, Jazz Research Initiative, Transition Magazine, Du Bois Review, Cooper Art Gallery, Hutchins Center Honors, Lecture Series, Contemporary Studies of Race &amp; Ethnicity (CSRE) workshop, etc.</p>
New York University	Department of Social and Cultural Analysis	<p><b>Asian/Pacific/American Institute:</b> Art Exhibitions, Artist-In Residence, Visiting Scholars Program, Lecture Series, Asian/Pacific American Documentary Heritage Archives Survey, A/P/A Voices: A COVID-19 Public Memory Project, etc.</p> <p><b>Institute of African American Affairs:</b> Conferences, Lecture Series, Workshops, Screenings, Art Exhibitions, Readings, Performances, Visiting Scholars, Artist Residencies, Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire Journal, etc.</p>
Northwestern University	Department of African American Studies	<p><b>Center for Native American and Indigenous Research:</b> Cross Disciplinary Research Hubs (Global Indigenities; Nationhood, Law, &amp; Governance; Environments, Health &amp; Social Welfare; Communities, Culture &amp; Activism), CNAIR Annual Research Symposium, Brown Bag Series, Visiting Scholars, Art Residencies, etc.</p> <p><b>Center for African American History:</b> Lecture Series, Faculty Colloquia, Symposia, Dissertation Working Group, etc.</p>
Tufts University	Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora	<p><b>Center for the Study of Race and Democracy:</b> Tufts African American Trail Project, Gerald Gill Fellowship, Symposia, Distinguished Speaker and</p>

		Lecture Series, National Dialogue on Race Day, Mellon Sawyer Seminars, Book Talks
University of California-Berkeley	Department of Ethnic Studies Department of African American Studies	<b>Center for Race and Gender:</b> Research Initiatives and Working Groups, Student Research Grant Program, Podcast, Lecture Series, Conferences, Forums, etc.  <b>Center for Research on Native American Issues:</b> Student Research Grants, Conferences, Colloquia, Native Youth Institute, Program for the Study and Practice of Indigenous Cultures and Languages, Native American Museum Studies Institute, Development Economics for Indian Country, etc.
University of Michigan	Department of Afroamerican and African Studies Department of American Culture	<b>African Studies Center:</b> African Heritage and Humanities Initiative (AHHI), African Social Research Initiative (ASRI), Ethiopia-Michigan Collaborative Consortium (EMC2), U-M African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS) Program, STEM-Africa, African Perspectives Book Series, Research Colloquium Series, Conferences, Workshops, etc.  <b>Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies:</b> Lectures, Workshops, Performances, and Conferences, Indigenous Language Programs, Teacher Training Workshops, Brazil Initiative, Student Research Grants and Fellowships, etc.
University of Pennsylvania	Department of Africana Studies	<b>Center for Africana Studies:</b> Lecture Series, Research Colloquia, Readings, Screenings, Africana Media Project, Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society, Marginalized Populations Project, etc.  <b>Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative:</b> Student Research Grants and

		Fellowships, Faculty Working Group, Lecture Series, Conferences, Museum Exhibitions, etc.
University of Southern California	Department of American Studies and Ethnicity	<p><b>Center for Diversity and Democracy:</b> Joint Educational Project, Good Neighbors Campaign, Graduate Certificate in Civic Engagement, Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, History in a Box, etc.</p> <p><b>Equity Research Institute:</b> Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, Activist Residencies, Research Initiatives (Economic Inclusion and Climate Equity, Immigrant Integration and Racial Justice, Social Movements and Governing Power, California Immigrant Data Portal, Solidarity Economics, Equity Atlas Projects, Coronavirus Crisis Research), Lecture Series, Conferences, etc.</p>
University of Texas at Austin	<p>Department of American Studies</p> <p>African and African Diaspora Studies Department</p> <p>Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Department</p>	<p><b>John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies:</b> Lecture Series, Symposia, Diaspora Talk Series, Performances, Book Talks, Art Exhibitions, etc.</p> <p><b>Latino Research Institute:</b> Latino Research Institute Fellowship Program, Institute for Advanced Doctoral Students, Research Projects (e.g. CAPAS Youth Project: Implementing a Church-Based Parenting Intervention to Promote NIDA Prevention Science among Hispanics), etc.</p> <p><b>Center for Asian American Studies:</b> annual conference; Graduate Portfolio (graduate certification) in Asian American Studies</p>
Yale University	<p>Department of African American Studies</p> <p>Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration</p>	<p><b>Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration:</b> Lecture Series, Lunch Series, Research and Conference Travel Awards, Social Text Journal, Conferences, Symposia, Workshops, Teacher Training, Faculty</p>

		<p>Fellows, Graduate Fellows, Mellon Arts &amp; Practitioner Fellows, etc.</p> <p><b>Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition:</b> Visiting Residential Research Fellowships, Annual International Conference, Lectures, Forums, Workshops, Working Groups, Frederick Douglass Book Prize, Teacher Training, Online Databases of Historical Documents, World Bibliography of Slavery and Abolition, Podcast, etc.</p>
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## APPENDIX I. Detailed Information about Centers at Peer Institutions

### 1) Brown University

- a) Department of Africana Studies (est. 2001)
- b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
  - i) **Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (CSREA):** Art Exhibitions, Teach-Ins, Centering Race Consortium (CRC) Symposia, CSREA Fellows Program, Signature Series (lectures, conversations, roundtables, workshops, seminars, etc.), Humanities Lab, Intercollegiate Collaborative Teaching Program, etc.
  - ii) **Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative:** Coursework (e.g. Nahuatl for Beginners and Indigenous Resurgence: Roots, Reclamations, and Relations), Lecture Series, Art Nights, Cultural Workshops, Conferences (e.g. Relationships, Reciprocity, and Responsibilities: Indigenous Studies in Archives and Beyond), Youth Ambassadors for Land Conservation Program with the Center for Native American Youth, Tracking COVID-19 in Indigenous Peru, The Database of Indigenous Slavery in the Americas (DISA), etc.
  - iii) **Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice:** Research clusters: Human Trafficking; Race, Medicine and Social Justice; Freedom Archive; Race, Slavery, Colonialism, and Capitalism; Historical Injustice and Democracy; Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America. Public Humanities Projects: Global Curatorial Project; Slave Trade Film Project; Exhibitions; Seminar series, arts initiatives, public engagement, annual reports.

### Harvard University

- a) Department of African and African American Studies (est. 1969)
- b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
  - i) **Hutchins Center for African and African American Research:** W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute, Hiphop Archive & Research Institute, Afro-Latin American Institute, Image of the Black Archive & Library, Project on Race & Gender in Science & Medicine, History Design Studio, Jazz Research Initiative, Transition Magazine, Du Bois Review, Cooper Art Gallery, Hutchins Center Honors, Lecture Series, Contemporary Studies of Race & Ethnicity (CSRE) workshop, etc.

### 2) New York University

- a) Department of Social and Cultural Analysis (est. 2005)
- b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
  - i) **Asian/Pacific/American Institute:** Art Exhibitions, Artist-In Residence, Visiting Scholars Program, Lecture Series, Asian/Pacific American Documentary Heritage Archives Survey, A/P/A Voices: A COVID-19 Public Memory Project, etc.

- ii) **Institute of African American Affairs:** Conferences, Lecture Series, Workshops, Screenings, Art Exhibitions, Readings, Performances, Visiting Scholars, Artist Residencies, Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire Journal, etc.
- 3) Northwestern University
- a) Department of African American Studies (est. 1972)
  - b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Center for Native American and Indigenous Research:** Cross Disciplinary Research Hubs (Global Indigeneities; Nationhood, Law, & Governance; Environments, Health & Social Welfare; Communities, Culture & Activism), CNAIR Annual Research Symposium, Brown Bag Series, Visiting Scholars, Art Residencies, etc.
    - ii) **Center for African American History:** Lecture Series, Faculty Colloquia, Symposia, Dissertation Working Group, etc.
- 4) Tufts University
- a) Department of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora (est. 2019)
  - b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Center for the Study of Race and Democracy:** Tufts African American Trail Project, Gerald Gill Fellowship, Symposia, Distinguished Speaker and Lecture Series, National Dialogue on Race Day, Mellon Sawyer Seminars, Book Talks, etc.
- 5) University of California, Berkeley
- a) Department of Ethnic Studies (est. 1969)
  - b) Department of African American Studies (est. 1970)
  - c) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Center for Race and Gender:** Research Initiatives and Working Groups, Student Research Grant Program, Podcast, Lecture Series, Conferences, Forums, etc.
    - ii) **Center for Research on Native American Issues:** Student Research Grants, Conferences, Colloquia, Native Youth Institute, Program for the Study and Practice of Indigenous Cultures and Languages, Native American Museum Studies Institute, Development Economics for Indian Country, etc.
- 6) University of Michigan, Ann-Arbor
- a) Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (est. 1970)
  - b) Department of American Culture (est. 2012)
  - c) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **African Studies Center:** African Heritage and Humanities Initiative (AHHI), African Social Research Initiative (ASRI), Ethiopia-Michigan Collaborative Consortium (EMC2), U-M African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS) Program, STEM-Africa, African Perspectives Book Series, Research Colloquium Series, Conferences, Workshops, etc.
    - ii) **Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies:** Lectures, Workshops, Performances, and Conferences, Indigenous Language Programs, Teacher Training Workshops, Brazil Initiative, Student Research Grants and Fellowships, etc.
- 7) University of Pennsylvania

- a) Department of Africana Studies (est. 2012)
  - b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Center for Africana Studies:** Lecture Series, Research Colloquia, Readings, Screenings, Africana Media Project, Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society, Marginalized Populations Project, etc.
    - ii) **Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative:** Student Research Grants and Fellowships, Faculty Working Group, Lecture Series, Conferences, Museum Exhibitions, etc.
- 8) University of Southern California
- a) Department of American Studies and Ethnicity (est. 1992)
  - b) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Center for Diversity and Democracy:** Joint Educational Project, Good Neighbors Campaign, Graduate Certificate in Civic Engagement, Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, History in a Box, etc.
    - ii) **Equity Research Institute:** Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, Activist Residencies, Research Initiatives (Economic Inclusion and Climate Equity, Immigrant Integration and Racial Justice, Social Movements and Governing Power, California Immigrant Data Portal, Solidarity Economics, Equity Atlas Projects, Coronavirus Crisis Research), Lecture Series, Conferences, etc.
- 9) University of Texas at Austin
- a) Department of American Studies (circa 1941)
  - b) African and African Diaspora Studies Department (est. 2010)
  - c) Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Department (est. 2014)
  - d) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies:** Lecture Series, Symposia, Diaspora Talk Series, Performances, Book Talks, Art Exhibitions, etc.
    - ii) **Latino Research Institute:** Latino Research Institute Fellowship Program, Institute for Advanced Doctoral Students, Research Projects (e.g. CAPAS Youth Project: Implementing a Church-Based Parenting Intervention to Promote NIDA Prevention Science among Hispanics), etc.
- 10) Yale University
- a) Department of African American Studies (est. 1969)
  - b) Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration (est. 1998)
  - c) Affiliated Centers and Institutes
    - i) **Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration:** Lecture Series, Lunch Series, Research and Conference Travel Awards, Social Text Journal, Conferences, Symposia, Workshops, Teacher Training, Faculty Fellows, Graduate Fellows, Mellon Arts & Practitioner Fellows, etc.

- ii) **Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition:** Visiting Residential Research Fellowships, Annual International Conference, Lectures, Forums, Workshops, Working Groups, Frederick Douglass Book Prize, Teacher Training, Online Databases of Historical Documents, World Bibliography of Slavery and Abolition, Podcast, etc

December 19, 2021

Professor Amanda Woodward, Dean  
Division of the Social Sciences  
The University of Chicago

Dear Amanda:

On behalf of the Division of the Humanities (HD), I am pleased to endorse the document proposing the formation of a Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity (RDI) in the Social Sciences Division of the University of Chicago. Further, I look forward to the establishment of this department, which I believe will bring significant benefits to the university.

The aspect of the RDI proposal that initially struck a chord with me is its three emphases on race, diaspora, and indigeneity. Not only is this trinity of ideas intriguing in a title, but I believe that combining these particular research foci will prove an inspired decision intellectually. The older concentration on “African American Studies” that came into vogue several decades ago and is represented in such units as the African American Studies Departments at Yale and Princeton and in the African and African American Studies Department at Harvard, has, to my mind, outlived its usefulness as a way of approaching race studies, not least because we now live in a highly globalized world. If “American” as a concept for studying race is no longer enough, “diaspora” and “indigeneity,” by contrast, bring to the fore aspects of the study of race that we today view as *sine qua non*, while simultaneously standing as independent concepts and essential drivers of peoples and movements in our world.

Moreover, in terms of research possibilities, these three axes—race, diaspora, and indigeneity—are mutually interdependent and reinforcing. Cutting across the strata of the lives and cultural production of Blacks, Hispanics, indigenous and other groups of peoples, they suggest to scholars that they should embrace these concepts in comparative ways. Opportunities for fruitful work both within a Department of RDI and in conjunction with other departments in SSD, HD, the Divinity School, the Crown School, the Harris School, etc., are thus almost limitless. The tripartite understanding of the mission of a department of RDI virtually ensures that UChicago will become a destination as the most innovative place for the study of these concepts, no doubt increasing the desirability of the university in terms of recruitment and retention. (In fact, I have just retained a professor against an offer from an Ivy-league counterpart in part by touting the important aspects of what I said I hoped will soon be a Department of RDI.)

As the proposal illustrates at every turn, the Department of RDI will reach out to many units on campus, and especially to those in the Humanities Division. Indeed, colleagues from HD have participated actively from the very start in efforts to draft a proposal, with six HD faculty serving on the Department Formation Committee. A number of HD colleagues have likewise expressed a desire to seek formal affiliation with the department, and the interdisciplinary nature of this unit will only be improved through collaboration with HD, which houses many faculty working on aspects of race, diaspora, and indigeneity. To offer a few examples, my colleagues study such topics as linguistic practices of First Peoples, literary depictions of marronage and slum housing and musical conceptions of time and speed in the Caribbean, Francophone North African literature, black classicism, music of migration, and numerous other subjects—including many with an African American perspective—that engage powerfully with concepts of race, diaspora, and indigeneity. Because of this felicitous overlap of HD interests with ones that would be highlighted in the Department of RDI in SSD, cross-listings of courses and other joint efforts that have long existed between us will be enhanced.

Equally impressive to my mind is the patience that those who have produced the proposal have shown in creating a compelling statement. In the wake of deeply troubling events that took place nationally in Spring 2020, many of our colleagues, as you know, began to push for a department that would focus on race studies. I found this effort unattractive at first, largely because the demands that were being made seemed to have insufficient thought behind them. I felt that our Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, which has served the university well as a hub for those engaged in various forms of race studies from many areas of our campus, was the “Chicago way” of doing things: create a place where persons researching issues relating to race from all over campus can go and work together. (Other examples of highly successful centers based in HD that function similarly include the Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies and the Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture.)

By Winter/Spring 2021, however, my attitude began to change. The group spearheading the effort to propose a new department had completely altered course. They expressed willingness to do the hard work it would take to build a department from the ground up, and they spent the 2020-21 academic year patiently examining the rationales, foci, and curricula of race studies departments at peer institutions; invited external speakers to give their advice; developed their unique, tripartite RDI approach; drafted a proposal that makes clear why a department (rather than a center) is needed; and repeatedly refined that proposal through conversations with scores of colleagues across campus. Each time I read drafts of the proposal, it had improved significantly. On 1 November 2021, I invited the co-chairs of the Department Formation Committee, Leora Auslander and Adom Getachew, to present the finished document to the chairs in HD; on 18 November they met with the broader HD faculty. On both occasions, my colleagues showed sincere engagement with the proposal, asking probing questions, and ultimately expressing strong support. It was not my place to call for a vote, since the proposal does not emanate from HD, but the universal enthusiasm that I have witnessed for it in the division for the last several months, including from several individuals who took the time to write letters of support, suggests to me that any vote taken would have been highly favorable.

Over more than three decades, I have witnessed the births of numerous entities at UChicago, ranging from workshops, to centers, to committees, to departments. Those units that originate organically out of shared faculty interests, spurred by founders who go on to move deliberately through a painstaking process of formation, garnering support from many corners of the university along the way, are the ones that take root successfully and thrive. I believe this will be the case for a Department of RDI at UChicago.

Sincerely,

*Anna W. Robertson*



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF  
SOCIAL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE**  
Advancing a More Just and Humane Society

Deborah Gorman-Smith, PhD

Dean

Emily Klein Gidwitz Professor

T 773.834.1781

[debg@uchicago.edu](mailto:debg@uchicago.edu)

December 22, 2021

To the Members of the Committee of the Council,

I write to provide my support, and the support of my colleagues at the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy and Practice, for the proposal recommending the formation of a Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity (RDI) in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago.

During a meeting with me in Fall 2020, the co-chairs of the committee outlined a high-level vision for a department on race studies, as well as a process through which they planned to gather information, deliberate, and develop a proposal. The final proposal put before the Committee now represents significant advancement from that initial conceptualization of a department, informed by a rigorous process that included examination of departments at peer institutions, a panel series of invited faculty leaders of race and ethnic studies at other universities, and extensive discussions with deans, department chairs, center directors, and other colleagues across campus. The result is a proposal for a department that does more than match that of peer institutions, but has the potential to shape the field by introducing a new and innovative approach to the academic study of race and closely related topics.

In addition to my review, the proposal for a new department was shared with the faculty of the Crown Family School for review and comment. The faculty met with co-chairs Leora Auslander and Adom Getachew on October 20, 2021 to discuss the proposal. The feedback from the faculty was uniformly positive, with all faculty present expressing support for the formation of the department. None of the faculty of the School expressed opposition to the proposal either during the meeting or in written or verbal communication to me.

The positive comments noted the ambitious intellectual vision of the proposal. The department's focus on the intersections among race, diaspora, and indigeneity was viewed as novel and forward thinking. There was appreciation for the interdisciplinary and methodological pluralism centering the proposal. While potentially challenging, as a School with faculty representing twelve social science disciplines and engaged in research using different methodological approaches, this disciplinary and intellectual pluralism was viewed by faculty at the Crown Family School as a particularly positive aspect of the proposal. The strategic and intentional integration of disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches was viewed as likely to enhance the ability to recruit and retain a strong group of faculty, lead to the development of new theoretical approaches and empirical methods, and support innovative training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Faculty expressed that the proposal for a new department addresses a long-standing and pressing need at the University, one that would enhance and strengthen research and education across units. That said, several faculty members raised concern that a new department would draw faculty working on race away from the School. Others suggested that the existence of such a department at the University will enhance the recruitment and retention of faculty across Schools and



departments, including at Crown. While an issue to give particular attention, the concern raised did not change support for the establishment of a department.

Additional questions and concerns were raised regarding the details of joint appointments, particularly for untenured faculty members, highlighting the complexities and potential demands associated. Recognizing the significant work involved in launching a new department, the co-chairs pointed to the hiring plan in the proposal, noting that the intent is to hire new faculty to be appointed full-time in the new department. There was general consensus that to be successful, the department will require full-time commitment from a core group of senior faculty members to begin. Overall, the concerns raised centered on logistics and funding and were not related to the substantive focus or conceptualization of the department. There is general agreement among the faculty that the issues of race, diaspora and indigeneity are important areas of study and that the absence of an academic unit dedicated to the study of race has limited the University's scholarly leadership in these areas.

Like my colleagues, I am impressed with the ambitious vision for the proposed department and believe this to be an important opportunity for the University to build from existing strengths to achieve greater scholarly excellence in these areas of study. I appreciate the committee's thoughtful, engaged and deliberative approach to the development of the proposal and fully support the proposal to establish the Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in the Division of the Social Sciences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Deborah Gorman-Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Deborah Gorman-Smith  
Dean



December 9, 2021

Dear Dean Woodward,

I write to express my enthusiastic support of the creation of the Department of Race, Diaspora Studies, and Indigeneity. I say this in my capacity as faculty member in Divinity and the College, and as interim dean this year in the Divinity School. In Divinity we have felt the need for just this sort of central academic unit on campus to ground the discussions that are going on in different areas and divisions. They are going on ad hoc, around and in between, with other obligations taking precedent -- to division, department, or discipline. A designated department would take that sort of extra pressure off and allow for the singular focus on a cluster of subjects, the most important of subjects, and the development of various methods and disciplines around them. The creative work around these subjects requires a home where it can grow and be nurtured in the way it deserves.

To organize a department around a subject or set of subjects, in this case contested subjects, is very familiar to our experiences in Divinity: we are a school devoted to the study of a single, contested, and complicated subject, religion/s. This singular focus allows for the highest level of interdisciplinarity, what everyone speaks about but few truly do: a type of research and teaching that draws from history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, literary studies, pretty much any recognizable category within the academic world, to explore a single subject/s from as many perspectives as possible while simultaneously revising, critiquing, and transforming the disciplines themselves (and of course many of the most exciting new theoretical approaches in the academy emerge in precisely these ways, around equally complex categories of gender, sexuality, disability, animality, etc.). The new department makes the promise of this in the same way, thinking in new ways using old and new tools controlled by focus on the foundational concerns in the formations of modern society, literature, culture, and philosophy.

I should add that there is a very practical appeal of the new department for Divinity. We are engaged in multiple searches this year aiming at a cluster hire in "Race and Religion." Whoever we hire will surely seek a secondary home in the new department of RDI, and we are hoping the promise of the new department of RDI will play a major role in helping to recruit our candidates.

Best regards,  
Jim

James Theodore Robinson  
Interim Dean, Divinity School



November 9, 2021

Dear Deans Woodward and Robertson,

On behalf of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, I write to express our enthusiastic support of the proposed Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity (RDI) Department. We believe that departmentalization is a crucial and momentous step in supporting scholarship and training on race, politics, and culture at the University. In solidarity with years of student advocacy and in acknowledgment of the work of our dedicated colleagues, we are excited to witness this historic vote in the Social Science Division and look forward to its instantiation at the University of Chicago.

The Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, currently celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, has been proud to shepherd and support an undergraduate major and minor, beginning with the assumption of the African American Studies undergraduate program which began in 1993 and currently under the moniker, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, which began in 2010. The shift in nomenclature reflects the varied fields of expertise and interests of the more than 100 faculty affiliates that cross list courses with our program, yet we also have experienced ongoing difficulty with offering courses with consistency. We believe that the Department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity will improve and strengthen research and teaching on these topics at the University of Chicago and become a paragon of departmental design.

Once constituted, RDI will be the first department in the US academy to work intentionally and systematically across racial and geographical formations. The innovative design of juxtaposing race, diaspora, and indigeneity--concepts and practices that have evolved in tandem with the modern world--has the potential to offer new paradigms for thinking across a constellation of conversant fields, including disciplines that have been established according to area, racial identity, or ethnicity.

We envision a strong relationship with the proposed department, as the Center continues to serve as a research and programmatic meeting ground for faculty, staff and students across the University and partners with community leaders and civic organizations in Chicago's southside and beyond.

We look forward to welcoming the Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity department as an exciting strategic and collaborative partner that will strengthen and enhance our work as related yet distinct entities.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

C. Riley Snorton  
Interim Faculty Director, Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture  
Professor of English and Gender and Sexuality Studies

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6 November 2011

Dean Amanda Woodward  
Division of the Social Science  
The University of Chicago

Dear Amanda:

I write in my capacity as the Faculty Director of the Pozen Family Center for Human Rights to express my strong support for the proposed new Department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity. The proposal is an intellectually exciting one whose innovative scaffolding will allow Chicago to become a leader in these critical fields. It also opens up the possibility of generative new collaborations on campus around these issues. At Pozen, we are especially drawn to the ways in which the department would build new strengths in Indigenous studies and broaden the study of diaspora from its current more Atlantic world focus toward attention to global patterns of circulation that link Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The human rights dimensions of Indigeneity and diaspora are central areas of concern for the Pozen Center, and we look forward to supporting the growth and development of research and teaching in these fields at the university under the auspices of RDI.

Questions of Indigenous rights are a critical part of the Pozen Center's strategic vision for the work we want to do on campus and in the world. Movements for indigenous rights at the local and global levels are among an ensemble of new rights claims that are at the forefront of the theory and practice of human rights. But as the RDI proposal rightly notes, even though Indigenous studies has a deep genealogy at Chicago it remains a severely underdeveloped field on campus. When Justin Richard was here in Anthropology, he was also a member of the Pozen Center Faculty Board. With Justin's leadership we were able to contribute toward building university partnerships with the Native curators at the Field Museum and with the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Native Studies at the Newberry Library. He was also instrumental in developing an indigenous rights module that is a part of our College core sequence, Human Rights in World Civilizations. But when Jason left the university, some of the energy around Indigeneity at Pozen waned (although we are looking forward to building a collaboration with Teresa Montoya, who will be joining our Board next year). This is an all too familiar cycle in smaller fields. It is difficult to sustain momentum when there is not a critical mass of faculty members to lead these efforts and build constituencies for them. One of the marvelous things the proposed RDI department will do is provide the kind of consistency as a convener and home that is critical for the sustained development and flourishing of underrepresented fields.

So too around the study of diaspora. The study of migration and statelessness, and more broadly as Hannah Arendt put it "the right to have rights," has been at the heart of the Pozen Center's mission over the last twenty-five years. The work and teaching of key

members of our Faculty Board has been on diasporic communities moving between Latin America or Europe and the United States, and more recently on the Middle East and its diasporas. We welcome the opportunities the proposed RDI department would open up to think more deeply on these questions in other geographical spaces. The commitment to building out faculty, research and curricular offerings on global Asia in the RDI document is of particular interest for the Pozen Center, and one we would be delighted to engage with and assist in taking forward.

We also see numerous potential collaborative pathways through which the proposed RDI department and Pozen might work together on curriculum and co-curricular support for students. Pozen is in the final stages of gaining approval for a new College major in human rights, and we see many synergies with the ways in which the discussion of a major in RDI is articulated in their planning document. Like RDI, we are also looking to build deeper relationships with the MA programs in the HUM and SSD, and see strong complementarities in our mutual commitments in those spaces. There are also important ways our shared commitments to support the work of doctoral students might productively interact. Pozen has recently established a support program for doctoral students that brings a group of ten advanced students together each year whose dissertations focus on human rights questions for the kind of generative interdisciplinary and post-disciplinary conversations that play such an important role in how the RDI proposal imagines its own intellectual labors will be organized. Pozen would be delighted to think with RDI about the ways in which our efforts in this sphere might provide a collaborative campus platform for some of their students as they build out their own doctoral program.

Exploring the questions that are at the heart of the proposed RDI department animates so much of the human rights research and teaching we do at the Pozen Center. It would be marvelous for us to be able to partner with them as they take their capacious and exciting vision forward to become what I am sure will be the leading intellectual space among our peer institutions for the study of race, indigeneity and diaspora.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Philip Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark Philip Bradley  
Bernadotte E. Schmidt Distinguished Service Professor of History  
Faculty Director, Pozen Family Center for Human Rights  
Deputy Dean, Division of the Social Sciences

CHICAGO CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY THEORY (3CT)  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
FOSTER HALL, ROOM 105  
1130 E. 59<sup>TH</sup> STREET, CHICAGO, IL 60637  
(773) 834-8733 • //ccct.uchicago.edu

Dean Amanda Woodward  
Social Sciences Division  
University of Chicago

November 11, 2021

Dear Dean Woodward,

We write in our capacities as co-directors of the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory (3CT) to express strong support for the proposed new Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity (RDI). We have read carefully over the proposal for the department and discussed it with our fellows in our quarterly meeting. As a center, we are collectively enthusiastic about this promising initiative, and we very much hope that the formation of the new department will be approved.

There are intellectual as well as institutional grounds for our collective excitement. The mission of 3CT is to foster rigorous, collaborative, interdisciplinary theorization of our contemporary social and political condition. It is impossible to do so today without a consideration of questions of race, diaspora, and indigeneity. Indeed, many of our core topical explorations—having to do with capitalism, neoliberalism, the emergence of new authoritarianisms, critical urban studies, media and populism, and environmental and planetary futures, to name but some—require a centering of questions of racialized histories, racial inequities, and racial justice in order to be adequately rigorous.

While many of 3CT's fellows are not, per se, scholars of race, none of us are untouched by the challenges presented by the racialization of contemporary social and political formations in ways that demand an invigoration of our empirical and conceptual methods. To this end, we have always fostered collaborations with scholars of race. This reflects both in the makeup of our fellowship and in our longstanding intellectual synergies with the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture. The proposed Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity promises to further enliven interdisciplinary collaborative possibilities. We anticipate that there will be numerous ways in which this department can both contribute to 3CT's existing projects and give rise to new ones. New faculty hires at the department in coming years would provide opportunities for enlarging and diversifying our fellowship. The possibilities for synergistic pedagogical and curricular development are also extensive and compelling. We and others on campus will benefit from the intellectually expansive and global scope of the proposed department, which makes it distinct from many African-American studies, Black studies, or Indigenous studies departments in peer institutions that focus primarily on America.

We believe that the proposed department responds to pressing intellectual needs, both in this university and in the academe writ large, to theorize the contemporary in inclusive ways and from a multiplicity of situated perspectives. RDI will not replicate the activities of 3CT, but it will complement and energize them. To our minds, the proposed department represents one of the most meaningful and exciting new initiatives

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(773) 834-8733 • //ccct.uchicago.edu

undertaken at the university in decades. We extend our wholehearted and enthusiastic support, and we look forward to the department's formal approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'L' followed by a long horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style that reads 'Kaushik Sunder Rajan'.

Lisa Wedeen  
Kaushik Sunder Rajan

06 November 2021

TO: Amanda Woodward, Dean of Social Sciences  
FROM: Richard Neer, Director of the Franke Institute for the Humanities  
RE: Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity Proposal

Dear Dean Woodward,

I am writing to express my strong support for the creation of a new department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity. I am not sure that my two cents are needed given that the proposal represents the considered opinion of a large cohort of distinguished faculty representing a broad array of departments. For what it is worth, however, I see strong intellectual and pragmatic arguments in favor of the new department. The primary intellectual issues, it seems to me, are whether the topics of race, diaspora and indigeneity are (i) sufficiently complex as to require specialized expertise, (ii) sufficiently broad as to exceed any existing field of inquiry or departmental structure and (iii) sufficiently important as to justify a major institutional commitment in lieu of our current network of centers and committees. An important pragmatic issue, meanwhile, is whether there exists beyond our walls a larger infrastructure of research within which such a department could thrive, place students and so on.

The answer in each case is clearly affirmative. Race, diaspora and indigeneity are indeed research topics in their own right: neither reducible to, nor adequately treated in, existing units and programs. They are complex and famously easy to mis-handle, hence require specialist expertise, yet are not so technical as to preclude broad discussion. They are exceedingly important both historically and in the present, with a global reach. Their study has already emerged as an academic discipline, viz. the list of departments at peer institutions listed in the appendix to the proposal. There is an extant infrastructure of research, with numerous scholarly journals already in our library and academic positions opening up for qualified students—not to mention a critical mass of faculty on campus.

The RDI proposal is nonetheless innovative. That is because, in the best tradition of our university, it casts the research and teaching agendas of the new department in terms of concepts and problems rather than in terms of traditional area studies. While focused on the United States—as befits a school in the capital of the American heartland—RDI would not be a department of Africana Studies to go alongside familiar “national” or “area” departments such as German, Slavic, Classics, Romance Languages and Literatures, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, or English. Rather it would address a set of interrelated research questions to go alongside Economics, Comparative Human Development or Philosophy. This shift represents a huge advance that should position the new department to take a leadership role in years to come, not least because it greatly expands the number of possible research topics.



More generally, the new department would be an important resource for other units by providing opportunities for researchers and students who want to retain traditional area-studies specialization while addressing the issues and methods of RDI. This point holds for the College no less than for the graduate programs; Core offerings such as “Classics of Social and Political Thought” or “Human Being and Citizen,” for instance, could very likely benefit from productive engagement with the new department, the better to reflect the fact that UChicago is increasingly a global university.

Here at the Franke Institute we run a Center for Disciplinary Innovation—in effect, an “innovation hub” for new academic programs—but it is not every day that we are able observe and participate in the emergence of a new department. Although the Franke cannot take credit for this initiative, from the perspective of disciplinary innovation the RDI proposal represents one of the most exciting and important developments to occur in my twenty-two years at UChicago. I very much hope it succeeds and give it my enthusiastic support.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Neer".

Richard Neer  
Barbara E. and Richard J. Franke Distinguished Service Professor in Art History, Cinema &  
Media Studies and the College  
Director, Franke Institute for the Humanities



Chicago, December 20, 2021

Amanda Woodward  
Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences  
William S. Gray Distinguished Service Professor of Psychology  
University of Chicago

Dear Amanda,

I am writing to share some thoughts about the proposal for the formation of a Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity, emphasizing in particular my perspective as director of the Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies (I position I will return to, for my second three year appointment, after this year of leave).

I believe the formation of the proposed department, as presented in this proposal, would be highly beneficial to the work we do at the Greenberg Center and would enhance it in many ways. While Jewish Studies is distinct and separate from the core areas of interest covered by the proposed department, there are conceptual and historic overlaps and points of convergence between the fields, as the proposal astutely points out, and students and faculty in Jewish Studies stand to benefit from the vibrant intellectual work that a department will enable at these points of intersection. For example, to paraphrase a point made by the report, the concept of diaspora is central to the understanding of a long Jewish history that dates to late antiquity. It is also key to understanding modern Jewish political formations, such as diaspora nationalism or the negation of diaspora as a central tenet of Zionism. Contemporary discussions of the term - scholarly and popular - draw from the way in which it has been extended to think more broadly of the movement and dispersion of communities across the globe, their transnational ties, and their orientation toward a shared place of origin. From my point of view, as someone deeply invested in enhancing conversations both within Jewish Studies and between Jewish Studies and other fields on this campus, the committee's choice to structure the proposed department around concepts rather than identities or geographical groupings holds tremendous promise.

One of the areas that I hope to develop at the Greenberg Center in the coming years is our ties to the place where we are located. In conversation with other colleagues at the Center, such as Jessica Kirzane (Yiddish lecturer in the Department of Germanic Studies), Anna Elena Torres (Assistant Professor of Yiddish literature at the Department of Comparative Literature) and Kenneth Moss (our new colleague who was hired as the Meyer Chair in Jewish History), we've been thinking of this as a concentrically expanding perspective: from the history of Jews on the South Side of Chicago, to the history of Jews in the city of Chicago, and the Midwest, to the various places they have migrated from and to. This has emerged as an area of priority partly in response to student interest, with the aim of drawing more students into our courses. It is also a reflection of trends in the field at large, where American Jewish History has been gaining traction as an important focus and conversations about Jews and race are the source of lively

discussion and debate. In trying to imagine what it would look like to do this work at the University in coming years, I find many points of inspiration and aspiration in the document prepared by our colleagues. In simple terms: the conversation about Jews in the US cannot happen without the broader context that the proposed department would provide. Again, what we are trying to develop at the Center would be adjacent to what the proposed department would do, not subsumed by it.

Let me illustrate what the Greenberg Center stands to gain from the formation of a department with a recent example of a pilot teaching program I have been trying to develop. This program would use the historic Oak Woods Cemetery, located about a mile from campus in Woodlawn, as a teaching site to allow students to think about the complex intertwined histories that have formed the South Side. A course like this can only work as a collaboration with colleagues who teach African American history, but it is very difficult to forge such collaborations when our colleagues in this field are already spread thin across different programs and departments, struggling to coordinate their various already existing teaching efforts and create a viable undergraduate program. I have no doubt that the process would have been infinitely more straightforward if there was a departmental structure that would make such collaborations more visible to other colleagues within the field, and supported it. This is just one example, and I am sure once the department is formed many other possibilities and options will open up.

Sincerely,

Na'ama



Na'ama Rokem

Director, the Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies (on leave 2021-2022)  
Associate Professor  
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations  
Department of Comparative Literature  
University of Chicago