



*At the heart of who we are*





*"Combining an African Past  
with an American Experience."*



## W E L C O M E

*The H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center (AACC) of University of Connecticut was established in 1968 to support African American students in the pursuit of the coveted higher education academic experience. It is recognized that many African American students face unique societal and institutional challenges in developing to the fullest extent of their potential. The Center strives to assist students in overcoming these challenges and supports them in their adjustment to college life through the*

*development of cultural awareness, academic excellence, leadership skills, social consciousness, and personal success.*

*The AACC is a warm, welcoming, and intellectually challenging environment that contributes to the vitality of campus for all students, their parents, faculty and staff.*

*The AACC is centrally located in the heart of campus in the Student Union, Suite 407.*

*Willena Kimpson Price, Ph.D.*

*Director of the H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center*

*Affiliate Professor: Africana Studies Institute & Diversity Studies Minor Program*

## *Mission Statement*

*The mission of the African American Cultural Center is to promote cultural preservation, quality leadership, and academic excellence through a unique approach to cultural advocacy, academic support, and community outreach.*

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### **Our Goals**

To promote cultural preservation through the promotion of cultural awareness and an understanding of the traditions and history of African Americans in the United States and people of African descent.

To provide a supportive and welcoming environment for all University students, faculty, and staff and the broader community.

To promote an understanding of and respect for diversity, multiculturalism and equity issues.

To promote programming events and activities which provide opportunities for cultural enrichment of all students, faculty and staff.

To assist students in navigating the many resources of the University by serving as a liaison to academic support services and opportunities.

To enhance and support the efforts of the University of Connecticut Office of Admissions and other departments in the recruitment and retention of African American students.



*All those who come to the  
Center enjoy experiences  
that make an impact and  
last a lifetime.*



*Programs with  
a Purpose*



### **Leadership Conference**

This day-long conference provides students who belong to campus organizations with the tools and training necessary to become effective leaders of their organizations. Group sessions focus on various issues, including cultivating organizational skills, as well as emphasizing the transition from leadership in college organizations to leadership in the corporate sector.

### **PA<sup>2</sup>.S.S.**

The PA<sup>2</sup>.S.S. (Preparing African Americans to Sustain Success) Program is designed to assist first-year and transfer students with their college transition. It provides first-year African American students access to a network of upper-class mentors. Mentors serve as liaisons to campus resources, services, organizations, events, and opportunities. They also are friends to those they mentor, offering support as these students begin to assimilate into the campus culture and community. The program has been an effective tool for helping to increase minority student retention on a predominately white rural university campus.

### **Amistad Academy**

The African American Cultural Center family has extended far beyond the Center itself, and is now making an impact in New Haven, CT. The AACC has formed a strong relationship with the Amistad Academy, a charter school located in New Haven. Throughout the year, the Center sponsors students from the Academy for the purpose of encouraging them to attend and succeed in college. Throughout the semester we invite students to our campus, enabling them to attend forums, dinners, and other activities in hopes of giving them their first real taste of college life.

### **The Vision**

The Vision is a monthly newsletter designed and produced by the African American Cultural Center. The newsletter includes articles, announcements, commentaries, editorials and advertisements, which keep the campus community aware of events, opinions and concerns of its African American members.

### **Martin Luther King Observance Day**

In a collaborative effort among the five cultural centers, residential life, Office of Diversity and Equity, and other departments, members plan and organizes various seminars and performances for the University of Connecticut Observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. This day long observance gives the University of Connecticut community and others the opportunity to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s pursuit of equal rights among different races, sexual orientations, nationalities, and religions.

### **AACC Outreach to Journey House**

AACC Outreach is designed to provide young women from Journey House with an in-depth and all-encompassing view of college life. In 2004, Natchaug Hospital opened a 13-bed transitional living community on its Mansfield Center campus to provide intensive, comprehensive mental health treatment and special education for adolescent girls. By participating in AACC Outreach, students have the opportunity to experience first-hand campus culture and community. This program also affords these young people with the great potential to form and build special bonds with UCONN students who, like many of the students participating in AACC Outreach, had to overcome obstacles to succeed in life as well. These bonds not only exist to encourage these young women to start a new journey in their life, but to also inspire them to achieve when they attend college.

*Events of  
Significance*



### **Homecoming**

During Homecoming, students gather at the African American Cultural Center to participate in "Spirit Week" here at UCONN. Homecoming events include banner and float competitions, alma mater arrangement competition, lip sync competition, football game, parade and, of course, the Homecoming King and Queen Pageant.

### **KUBE – Kids & UConn Bridging Education**

KUBE, a partnership with the UConn Asian American Cultural Center and the African American Cultural Center, is a one-on-one mentoring program with middle school students from Killingly and Windham, Connecticut. This program is unique in its structure and in its use of a curriculum that broadens geographic, cultural, and intellectual horizons, and builds knowledge, skills, and experience for young students to succeed in a multicultural world. Monthly gatherings consist of cultural activities, science programs, journal writing, and field trips to local museums and art venues.

### **Kwanzaa**

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan African holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. At the close of each semester the Center sponsors the traditional feast and lighting of the Kinara as a part of a Kwanzaa celebration for the entire campus to enjoy.

### **Mr. And Miss Black UCONN Pageant**

A fun-filled competition for the African American men and women of UCONN. Contestants not only compete for a host of gifts and the crown, but also to represent the AACC in the Homecoming King and Queen Pageant. Contestants are judged on their talents, casual and formal wear, and their response to a question concerning issues surrounding African American identity and culture.

### **Guest Lecturers**

Throughout the years, students are afforded the opportunity to hear and speak with a variety of prestigious and respected community members. The list of past lecturers include Tavis Smiley, Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, Al Sharpton, Bill Cosby, Quincy Jones, Dick Gregory, Maulana Karenga, Sir Quett Ketumile Jone Masire, Ambassador Mamadou Mansour Seck, Jawanza Kunjufu, Danny Glover, Iyanla Van Zant, Tommy Ford, Jackie Joyner Kersee, Jeffrey Cousin Jeff Johnson, Madame Nana Rawlings, Wole Soyinka, Omar Tyree, and Prodigy from the group Mobb Deep.

### **Black History Month Opening Ceremony**

Throughout the year, the Center prides itself on sponsoring programs that celebrate African American heritage and history. For the entire month of February, which has been nationally designated Black History Month, the Center works especially hard to celebrate African American legacies and culture through various lectures, workshops, exhibits, and symposiums.

### **AACC 50th Anniversary Gala Weekend**

The AACC commemorated its 50th Anniversary with a weekend of events that culminated in an outstanding Gala. Dr. James Lyons, the AACC's first director as well as many other notable UConn Alumni and Staff attended this once in a lifetime event.



President Susan Herbst & Dr. Price



Attendees at the Gala



Ace Livingston Jazz Band



Dr. Price and Links, Inc.



Students at the Gala



Special Adviser for Athletics, Dee Rowe



Awards Presented at the Gala



AACC 50th Honored at the Benton Museum

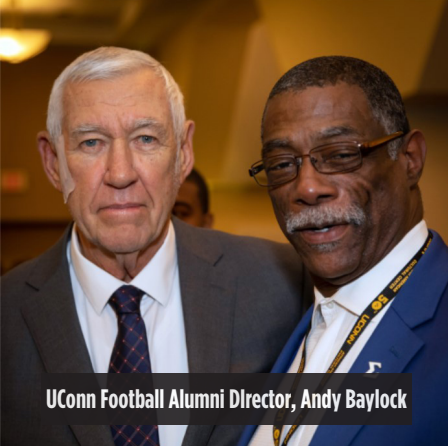
*gala*



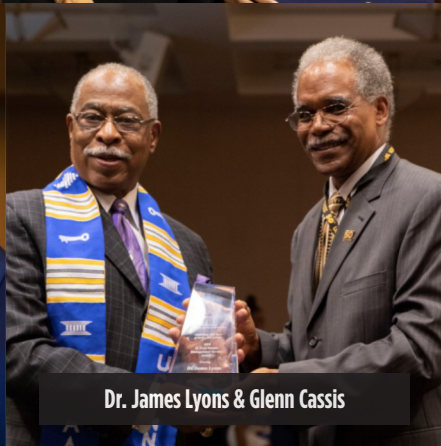
Dr. LaVigne & Dr. Kathleen Battle



Pres. Emeritus Phil Austin & Dr. Price



UConn Football Alumni Director, Andy Baylock



Dr. James Lyons & Glenn Cassis



Rev. Dr. Claudette A. Copeland



Voices of Freedom Alumni Reunion Choir



Associate Athletic Director, Jamelle Elliott



Program for AACC 50th Brunch

*The Center's doors are always  
open with programs, events,  
and activities that open hearts  
and minds. We are here  
for you!*



## *Our History*

*The H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center was founded in 1968 in response to the national unrest created by the Civil and Human Rights issues of the time. The AACCC is under the auspices of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the leadership of Dr. Willena Kimpson Price.*

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### **African American Organizations**

African American Professionals Association (AAPA)  
African Students Association (ASA)  
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.  
Brothers Reaching Our Society  
Black Student Association (BSA)  
Campus Curlz  
ENCORE - Hip-Hop & Contemporary Dance Club  
Graduate Students of Color Association  
Sisters Inspiring Sisters (SIS)  
Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (MAPS)  
Minority Health Matters  
National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of Black Accountants (NABA)  
National Black Law Student Association (NBLSA)  
National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)  
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)  
National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)  
Nubian Foxes - West Indian Dance Club  
UConn One Heart  
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.  
Poetic Release  
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.  
UConn All-Stars - Step Team

UConn Praise Dance Ministry  
UConn Set Apart Ministries  
UConn Voices of Freedom Gospel Choir  
West Indian Student Organization (WISO)  
The Vision - AACCC Arts & Wellness Magazine  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

### **Facility Description**

The AACCC occupies a 3500 square foot suite on the fourth floor of the Student Union. The architecturally designed facility includes a large reception area, a fully equipped kitchen, a computer room with 10 new Dell computers and printers with access to copying privileges, a student programmers office, an administrative specialist office, center director's office, a conference room, a community room for meetings, events, programs and classes, a newspaper office, the P.A2.S.S (Preparing African Americans to Sustain Success) peer mentor program office, a library, and a unisex restroom.

# UConn

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT



**H. FRED SIMONS**  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
**CULTURAL CENTER**

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Phone: 860.486.2070

**Center Hours:**

8:30 AM – 11:00 PM Monday-Thursday

8:30 AM – 9:30 PM Friday

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Instagram: [@uconn.aacc](https://www.instagram.com/uconn.aacc)