

# The Trotter Gazette

Annual Newsletter of the Trotter Institute Vol. 1 Issue. 1

2/1/2024

## Trotter Institute Has a New Director

*Trotter has new leadership*

Hettie V. Williams, PhD has been selected as the new director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture was founded at the University of Massachusetts Boston in 1984 to address the concerns of Black communities in Boston and Massachusetts through research, technical assistance, and public service.

Dr. Williams comes to the Trotter from Monmouth University located in West Long Branch, New Jersey where she taught African American history for more than fifteen years. She is also the most recent former president of the African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS). Her research is focused on African American intellectual history, Black women's history, and race/ethnic studies. She has written several book chapters, articles, essays and authored/co-edited six books. Williams has said she is engaged in a "reboot" of the Trotter to highlight and advance the great work that has already been accomplished by the Institute in the last few decades. This reboot will involve programming related to Black thought, history, and culture as well as working with new community partners to advance the mission of the Trotter.

Williams intends to focus on history, culture, and public policy initiatives simultaneously in her approach to running the Trotter. This will involve revitalizing the *Trotter Review*, revamping the Black Studies Matters Black History Month series, and the public policy publication *Resilience*. She believes that what was started here with previous directors such as Dr. Quito Swan, and Barbara Lewis, among others, should be continued. That said, she also intends to bring in some new ideas that specifically focus on the experiences of Black women in history, culture, and society.

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## Trotter Institute Events

*Several Programs are Planned*

There are several activities planned for the upcoming year at the Trotter. These include episodes for the new podcast of the Trotter Institute called **"Black in Boston and Beyond"** that focuses on the Black experience in Boston and the larger African Diaspora. Several Black History months events have been planned and this **newsletter** will publish once a year in January to update the campus and community on the events of the Trotter.

Events in February for Black History Month include a book talk, art contest, and film screening. Some of these events will be virtual while others will be in person on the UMass campus (as weather and the current public health emergency allows). See page five for more information.

# The Trotter Transition Team

## *A group hard at work!*

The Trotter Institute transition team has been hard at work maintaining the Institute that has been without a permanent director for some years. This team has been led by Drs. Michael Johnson, Professor in the Department of Public Policy, and Mickaella Perina, Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at UMass Boston. Two critical members of the transition team include Trotter staff member Yvonne Gomes-Santos and graduate student Nick Johnson. Members of the transition team also include:

Drs. Nada Ali, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, UMass Boston, Nedra Lee, Department of Anthropology, UMass Boston, Denise Patmon, Office of Faculty Development, College of Education and Human Development, UMass Boston, Lorna Rivera, Director of the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and Department of Women's Studies at UMass Boston, Tony Vandermeer, Department of Africana Studies at UMass Boston; and doctoral student Chidimma Ozor Commer. Community members include Elizabeth Tiblanc, Embrace Boston, Atyia Martin, All Aces, Inc., and L'Merchie Frazier, Museum of African American History, Boston.



**Dr. Williams, Director of the Trotter**

This group has done a great deal to keep the Trotter alive including maintaining our office, programs, community connections, and other initiatives.

## **New Podcast: Black in Boston and Beyond**

The Trotter Institute now has a new podcast called "Black in Boston and Beyond." Dr. Williams is the host of the show. "Black in Boston and Beyond" will air weekly and can be heard on Spotify and Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen to your podcast shows. The idea here is to interview a broad variety of guests including book authors, poets, activists, community leaders, filmmakers, and a host of others both from and allied with the Black community in Boston and beyond. The show will air during the academic year and is released on Sundays once per week.





# Programs and Initiatives of the Trotter Institute

By Dr. Michael Johnson

## New projects

The Trotter Institute has been invited to serve with other CANALA institutes and representatives across UMass Boston to advise Bala Sundaram, Vice Provost for Research & Dean of Graduate Studies and Apurva Mehta, Interim VP for IT Information Technology on implementation of a National Science Foundation award titled “Addressing Digital Access Gaps in Education” [ADAGE], intended to provide information technology resources and knowledge to about 200 members of the UMass Boston student body and 100 families in ‘anchor communities’ that UMB serves who are most likely to benefit from these resources. These resources include:

- Retrofitting classrooms to follow the HyFlex model to improve UMB’s ability to provide educational content in a synchronous online modality
- Microsoft Surface laptop computers and educational software, and Verizon broadband access ‘hot spots’
- IT skills-building courses, including Digital Inclusion Program; with Skillsgapp to offer educational content using gamification; ‘Everyone Can Code’ workshops, and UMB professional development courses
- STEM/STEAM coding, cybersecurity, technician, and work-based learning programs

The Trotter Institute will work with the ADAGE project to help identify UMB student participants, and community family participants from Dorchester, as well as assist in program design, implementation and evaluation.

## Ongoing projects

The Trotter Institute has worked with the Gaston Institute for Latino Policy, the Institute for Asian American Studies and the Institute for New England Native American Studies on a project funded by the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services to learn about the perceptions of and experiences with the opioid crisis and substance abuse generally, and ways that BSAS can better meet the needs of communities of color in Greater Boston. Michael Johnson and Aminah Pilgrim are co-principal investigators for the Trotter Institute portion of the project. This needs assessment has been performed through focus groups. The Trotter Institute has organized two focus groups for Cape Verdean residents of the Boston area, and ministers of African-American-serving Christian churches in Boston to discuss substance abuse, and is organizing another focus group with Haitian American residents of Boston. Our findings include that shame, stigma and stereotypes about substance abuse are widespread in our communities, and that BSAS will have to do much more to engage with linguistically and culturally diverse Black and African diaspora communities to ensure that people know who they can talk with and learn from to reduce the harms associated with substance use, misuse, and abuse. The contract for this project has been renewed by BSAS for 2023 – 2024; field research will continue, and emphasis will be on more rigorous data analysis and policy recommendations.

## Ending projects

### *Boston AgeStrong Commission*

The Trotter Institute has worked with the Gaston Institute for Latino Policy and the Institute for Asian American Studies on a project funded by the Boston AgeStrong Commission to learn about information inequity among elder communities of color in the city of Boston, and needs of our elders for new and improved programming and services. Michael Johnson worked with UMB doctoral student Nyingilanyeofori Hannah Brown between October 2022 – June 2023 to arrange

interviews with eleven service providers, elected officials, faith leaders and community residents that provided valuable information about unmet needs of our elders for programs, services, funding and information in ways that are culturally responsive and flexible.



### ***Boston Public Schools***

The Trotter Institute has worked with the Gaston Institute for Latino Policy, the Institute for Asian American Studies, and the Institute for New England Native American Studies on contract with Boston Public Schools to support their ethnic studies curriculum development project. From November 2021 – June 2023, the CANALA institutes developed their own case studies of themes, events and places that would provide special insight to Boston’s public-school students about their own communities. The Trotter Institute’s case study, co-directed by Michael Johnson and Denise Patmon, addressed the history of the Columbia Point public housing community, from the early 1950s through the mid-1980s, and its replacement by Harbor Point on the Bay, and the impending development of Dorchester Bay City on the site of the Bayside Expo Center. With the invaluable assistance of UMB sociology masters student Debby Fernand and Harvard Graduate School of Education doctoral student (and UMB alum) Christian Walkes, the team assembled primary and secondary source documents, examples of arts and creative expression connected to housing and community development, explorations of core ethnic studies frameworks related to Columbia Point, and many other resources that are expected to support innovative teaching and learning about Black resistance and community development in the neighborhood where UMB is located.

## **Trotter Affiliated Faculty Research and Teaching**

Trotter affiliated faculty are world renowned faculty, community engaged scholars, and social justice activists.

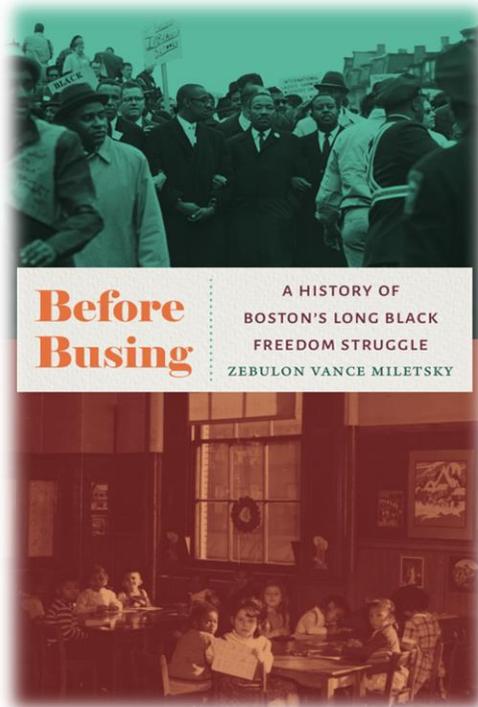
- Hettie V. Williams is Professor of History in the Department of History and the current Director of the Trotter Institute her areas of expertise include African American intellectual history and her latest publication is *A Seat at the Table: Black Women Intellectuals in Modern U.S. History* (University Press of Mississippi, 2023)
- Nedra Lee is Associate Professor of Anthropology directs the New England African American Archeology Lab and she has received funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Texas Historical Commission and previously worked for the Smithsonian Institution Libraries and the City Museum of Washington
- Tony Vandameer’s is a Senior Lecturer III in the Africana Studies Department his areas of expertise include leadership and change, community economic development, and traditional African beliefs systems
- Michael Johnson is Professor of Public Policy & Public Affairs his areas of expertise include planning models for public-sector facility location and service delivery, with applications to assisted housing and senior services; he has published many policy papers, journal articles and book chapters
- Mickaella Perina is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and her areas of expertise include philosophy of law, social and political contemporary French philosophy, Caribbean philosophy, Philosophy of race and she has published numerous articles, essays, and book chapters
- Denise Patmon is Professor and Chair in the Department Leadership in Education and she has published enumerable articles, policy reports, and papers
- Nada Ali is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and her areas of expertise include gender and development, governance, human rights, and feminist theories and methodologies
- Lorna Rivera is Associate Professor in the Department of Leadership and Education, and the Director of the Gaston Institute; her research areas include women’s literacy, feminist/critical pedagogies, social welfare reform, Latina Studies, race and ethnic studies, and gender and health disparities; she has published several papers and policy reports.

# Trotter Black History Month Programs 2024

There are several events planned for Black History Month sponsored by the Trotter Institute in February, 2024. These programs include a **student art contest** partnering with the University of Massachusetts Boston Art Department, with special thanks to Professors Cat Mazza and Zack Horn, and Embrace Boston who we thank for their generous support of student prizes. Student participants are invited to attend a **reception in their honor on February 5** on the UMass Boston campus. There will be a **virtual screening of the Oscar shortlisted short narrative film “Il Moro”** (The Moor) directed by **Daphne Di Cinto** on Tuesday, **February 13, from 4:00 to 5:15 pm** and on Wednesday, including a panel discussion with the director and Dr. Angelica Pesarini, Assistant Professor in Race and Cultural Studies/Race and Diaspora and Italian Studies at the University of Toronto. This post film panel will be moderated by Dr. Kenneth Campbell Professor of History at Monmouth University. And on **February 21 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm** an **on campus book talk** with Dr. Zebulon Vance Miletsky about his new publication *Before Busing: A History of Boston’s Long Black Freedom Struggle* published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2022 on the campus of UMass Boston. Miletsky is one of the region’s foremost experts on the history of African Americans in Boston.



Director Daphne Di Cinto



Before Busing by Zeb Miletsky



## Faculty Research Fellows and Associates

### Restorative Justice Commission Fellows

**Name:** Dr. Amanda Potasznik, She/hers

**Titles & Affiliations:** Doctor of Philosophy

**Research and Teaching:** I currently teach Ethics in Computer Science at UMB. My research interests include Algorithmic and Automation Bias, AI Ethics, Educational Technology Policy, and Governmental Regulation of Big Tech and Big Data companies.

**Recent Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.) :** First author: ABCs: Differentiating Algorithmic Bias, Automation Bias, and Automation Complacency – Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Architect of UMB Computer Science department's Broadening Participation in Computing plan, approved by the National Science Foundation.



**Name:** Dr. Dana Francisco Miranda (He/Him)

**Titles & Affiliations:** Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Faculty Fellow at the Applied Ethics Center

**Research and Teaching:** Dana Francisco Miranda is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Faculty Fellow for the Applied Ethics Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston. His work is in political philosophy, Africana philosophy, psychosocial studies, and the philosophy of history. His recent research includes examining how monuments can be understood through a multidimensional model wherein the political, historical, aesthetic, epistemic, affective, and ethical are considered and contextualized through public and private memories. His recent work on monuments has appeared in the Journal of Global Ethics, the Contested Histories Initiative, Disegno: The Quarterly Journal of Design, and Black Issues in Philosophy, a section of the Blog of the American Philosophical Association (APA). He also currently serves as the Secretary of Digital Outreach & Chair of Architectonics for the Caribbean Philosophical Association.

**Recent Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.):** As part of the Contested Histories Initiative, I produced a co-written paper titled, "U.S. Contested Histories, Memory and Repair: Navigating the Monuments Debate." This piece co-written with Nir Eisikovits explains the importance of monuments to both commemorative landscapes and political belonging. In addition, I received an Anti-Racism Grant ("In Her Name: To Make a Monument of Phillis Wheatley") by the Faculty Staff Union that sponsored lectures, workshops, and a design contest around the legacy of the African American poet Phillis Wheatley Peters.



**Name:** Evan Auguste (he/him)

**Titles & Affiliations:** Assistant Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology UMass Boston

**Research and Teaching:** Due to the adverse psychological, cognitive, and behavioral impact of oppression and historical injuries, there is a need for culturally specific and relevant healing and mental health services across society for people with marginalized identities. In particular, traditional theories and therapies often do not consider or capture the cultural context and experiences that are pivotal to psychological impacts on Black people. To help address this need, community leaders and mental health professionals will be trained in a virtual mode of African-centered healing, the Sawubona Healing Circles (SHC). are a culturally-grounding and affirming healing strategy for Black people that addresses their unique experiences of race-based invisibility and trauma. Created by the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi), SHCs reflect the concept of Sawubona (an ancient Zulu greeting: "we see you") and utilize an Afrocentric model to provide a healing space for Black people. Although Sawubona was initially developed to support Black first responders and frontline healthcare workers, the groups have been expanded to offer support more broadly. This project aims to leverage the specific African diasporic and local Black populations' connections to healing to co-create free virtual support available for Black people in Massachusetts processing racial trauma.

**Recent Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.):** In 2023 I published 3 academic articles: "Psychology's Contributions to Anti-Blackness in the United States within Psychological Research, Criminal Justice, and Mental Health", "La Lutte Continue: Louis Mars and the Genesis of Ethnopsychiatry", and "Hair Messages: A Context for Exploring Racial Socialization Among African American Males", as well as one policy memo: "Mental Health Impacts of Police Violence and Reassessing Policing as a Community Safety Strategy." I also received one of the Coalition for Ethnic Psychological Association's Leadership Fellowships as well as a Restorative Justice Commission Fellowship, all of which informed my community work including contributing to the Institute for the Development of Human Arts' Core Curriculum (a resource for community mental health informed by critical and radical approaches to psychology) and Black is Beautiful in Boston.



**Name:** Huimin Yan; She/Her

**Titles & Affiliations:** Associate Professor, Department of Exercise and Health Sciences

**Research and Teaching:** Dr. Yan's research program is dedicated to unraveling the intricate interplay between diet, exercise, and vascular function across the lifespan, with a keen focus on understanding racial disparities in these dynamics. Currently, her work delves into investigating the impact of exercise training on microvascular function and sympathetic reactivity in African American and White women. Additionally, Dr. Yan collaborates with Dr. Christina Dieli-Conwright on a project aiming to assess the effects of a home-based exercise intervention on treatment outcomes and comorbid disease risk in minority cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, contributing to advancements in both cardiovascular health and cancer care.

**Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.):** In 2023, I published a manuscript titled "Racial Differences in Blood Pressure and Autonomic Recovery Following Acute Supramaximal Exercise in Women" in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. This work sheds light on racial variations in blood pressure responses and autonomic recovery post-acute supramaximal exercise among Black and White women, contributing valuable insights to the field of cardiovascular health.



**Name:** Dr. Keith Jones & Dr. Tony Vandermeer

**Titles & Affiliations:** Lecturer (Keith) / Senior Lecturer (Tony)

**Research and Teaching:** Dr. Van Der Meer and Dr. Jones intend to work collaboratively to interview and survey participants in the Sankofa Conversations on Structural Racism series in the fall of 2020. This framework will provide participants the opportunity to assess whether any progress has been made institutionally and what specific projects would need to be undertaken, campus-wide, to realize the values and goals the series pointed to and sought to address. Their methodology and analytics will be grounded in a reflexive and data-driven effort to establish, among participants and stakeholders, what the impact has been of various organizing efforts and what still needs to be done to move UMass Boston forward.

**Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.):** Dr. Tony Van Der Meer is a Senior Lecturer in the Africana Studies Department and 2021 co-recipient (with Dr. Keith Jones) of the Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award for his leadership in campus-wide efforts to help transform the university into an anti-racist and health-promoting public research institution. The author and editor of numerous scholarly books and essays, he is the editor of a forthcoming volume entitled *Through an Unfiltered Lens: Black Power in Boston and the Black World*.

**Dr. Keith Jones** is a Lecturer in the Africana Studies Department and the current Poet-in-Residence at New England Conservatory. His recent manuscript, *Las Palmas*, was just announced as the winner of the 2023 Omnidawn Poetry Chapbook Prize. A critical essay on the Black queer speculative fiction writer Samuel R. Delany, entitled "A Time of Plague: Allegory, Seriality, and Historicity in Samuel Delany's Return to Nevèryon," is forthcoming from the scholarly journal MELUS (Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States).



**Name:** Stacy L. Bender, she/her

**Titles & Affiliations:** Associate Professor, Department of Counseling & School Psychology, UMass Boston

**Research and Teaching:** My research focuses on (a) improving students' social-emotional/behavioral wellness through behavior screening and intervention implementation (b) understanding how school psychologists utilize diverse family engagement practices in schools and (c) promoting social justice and cultural responsiveness in graduate training. I am also a co-Principal Investigator of Project Beacon: Training School Mental Health Providers in Transformative Social Emotional Learning and Advocacy, with its purpose being to train school psychologists and school counselors from diverse backgrounds to work in high-needs schools, therefore increasing students'

access to school mental health services. My project that is funded jointly by the Trotter Institute and the Institute of Asian American Studies seeks family perspectives on culturally relevant facilitators and barriers to accessing education (i.e., academics, social-emotional, behavioral) in K-12 schools.

**Recent Work (Publications, Community Activities, etc.):** Bender, S. L., Hendricker, E., Ouye, J., & Rodriguez, M. (September, 2023). Family engagement during the IEP process. *Communiqué*, 52(1), 23-25. <https://www.nasponline.org/publications/periodicals/communique/issues/volume-52-issue-1> Fallon, L. & Bender, S. L. Best practices in behavioral problem-solving approaches to school consultation (2023). In P. Harrison, S. Proctor, & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology* (7th ed.). NASP. Hendricker, E., Bender, S. L., Ouye, J., & Kenney, E. (2023). School-based family intervention services: Current school psychologists' practices. *Contemporary School Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-023-00476-2> Hendricker, E., Bender, S. L., & Ouye, J. (2023). Engaging and collaborating with families across multitiered systems of support: Current school psychologists' practices. *Psychology in the Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22895> Additionally, a team of faculty from the School Psychology program (Drs. Fallon, Paskiewicz, and myself) and School Counseling program (Drs. Cook, Hayden, and Poynton) at UMB received a Mental Health Service Professional (MHSP) Demonstration Grant (CFDA 84.184X) from the U.S. Department of Education. Our project is titled Project Beacon SEAS: Advancing Student Equity, Access, and Success (SEAS) in School Mental Health and is funded for five years.



### **Trotter Institute: A Brief History**

The William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture was founded at the University of Massachusetts Boston in 1984 to address the concerns of the Black communities in Boston and Massachusetts through research, technical assistance, and public service. The institute takes its name from early twentieth century African American activist William Monroe Trotter, whose political advocacy, radical journalism, and Black internationalism placed Black diasporic communities across the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa in critical conversation. The Trotter Institute aims to serve as an intellectual hub that can support the mission of social justice for Black communities.