COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP
AT PRINCETON AND BEYOND

ProCES
25th Anniversary

Sponsored by the G.S. Beckwith Gilbert ’63 Lecture Series

APRIL 3, 4, 5, 2024

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
ProCES
PROGRAM FOR
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY | OFFICE OF THE
Dean of the College
Community-Engaged Scholarship at Princeton & Beyond

On April 3, 4, and 5th, 2024, the Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES), formerly the Community-Based Learning Initiative (CBLI), celebrates 25 years of the program’s life at Princeton University. The activities feature a selection of regional and national scholar-practitioners from universities and community-based organizations whose work exemplifies community-engaged teaching, learning, and research collaborations around topics of community history, environmental and racial justice, refugee and immigrant settlement, and food access and justice.

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

6:30-7:15 PM, Opening Reception at Princeton Public Library

7:15-9:00 PM, Public Screening and discussion of the award-winning documentary Descendant

Location: Princeton Public Library’s Community Room (65 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542)

Screening and discussion with Ms. Joycelyn Davis, Africatown community advocate, co-founder and Vice-President of the Clotilda Descendants Association and organizer of the Spirit of Our Ancestors Festival & Dr. Kern Jackson, co-writer and co-producer of Descendant, Associate Professor & Director of the African American Studies Program, University of South Alabama.

Discussion will be facilitated by Magdely Michelle Diaz de Leon ’24, Medical Anthropology, Environmental studies.

Descendant follows members of Africatown, a small community in Alabama, as they share their personal stories and community history as descendants of the Clotilda, the last known slave ship to illegally transport human beings as cargo from Africa to America. The ship’s existence, a centuries-old open secret, is confirmed by a team of marine archeologists. The film explores implications of the Clotilda’s discovery for the descendants, who grapple with their heritage while claiming the power to shape their own destinies. Descendant received the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Creative Vision at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival.
Thursday, April 4, 2024

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: EXEMPLARS FROM THE FIELD

Panel 1: Noon-1:30

Connecting Campus, Curriculum, and Communities for Reciprocal Gains: Engaged Scholarship at Swarthmore
Location: Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building room 399

This presentation will address the overall approach the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility has taken under the leadership of Ben Berger to reimagine engaged scholarship at Swarthmore, which has focused on faculty collaborations, curricular innovations, and deep community partnerships. Katie Price will offer a brief overview of particularly successful programs in the Arts & Humanities, including our partnership with the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting and the recently launched Engaged Humanities Studio. Yaroub Al-Obaidi and Katie Price will then co-present on Friends, Peace, and Sanctuary, a project that brings together book artists with members of the resettled Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian communities. The project was formally recognized by the City of Philadelphia for its contributions to the community in 2019, and has since continued in several forms, including the formation of an Arabic-English newspaper in the city of Philadelphia, several academic publications, and a new course—cross-listed in Arabic and English—Refuge: Resettled in Philadelphia, which brings community partners, students, and instructors together to co-create a comic book about “sticky families.”

Swarthmore College’s mission statement outlines an explicit commitment to peace, equity, and social responsibility, rooted in our founding as a co-educational, Quaker, liberal arts college. “Engaged scholarship” represents a major component of living into that commitment. Swarthmore views engaged scholarship as an orientation, one that directs our energies not solely toward an academic community, or toward the life of the mind, but also toward pressing public issues and shared problems. Through its Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, one of the largest and most active engaged scholarship centers at any liberal arts college, Swarthmore connects campus, curriculum, and communities for reciprocal gains. Our wide-ranging approaches include intensive collaborations with off-campus partners; experiential learning that connects students with issues outside the classroom; and scholarship that resides on campus but aims toward social amelioration or public benefit.
Panelists:

Ben Berger ’90 is Executive Director of the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility and Associate Professor of Political Science at Swarthmore College

Katie L. Price is Senior Associate Director of the Lang Center and teaches courses in the English department at Swarthmore College

Yaroub Al-Obaidi is an Iraqi-American conceptual and social artist and is a PhD candidate and lecturer in Rhetoric and Communications at Duquesne University.

Panel 2: 4:30-5:45 PM

Responsible Research Practices with Environmental Justice Communities: Africatown Community History
Location: Chancellor Green Rotunda

In 1860, the last ship of enslaved people landed on the shore of Mobile Bay. After the end of the Civil War, these survivors of the Middle Passage bought land on the plateau above the river, built homes and a school, and called this place Africatown. Africatown was a sanctuary for Black Americans throughout Reconstruction and Jim Crow. However, like many historic Black towns along the Gulf Coast, Africatown has been surrounded by polluting industries located on former plantation grounds. Present and avoidable threats include ongoing pollution, rezoning of residential areas to heavy industry, and increased truck traffic diverted from a new toll bridge. In the wake of the 2019 discovery of the slavership Clotilda, Africatown has attracted international attention through the award-winning 2022 documentary Descendant.

Black descendant communities like Africatown are knowledge keepers, maintaining stories, ceremonies, and practices. Ms. Joycelyn Davis, a Clotilda Descendant, has been engaged in a lifelong project to tell Africatown’s story and support the community’s ability to survive and thrive. Dr. Kern Jackson, a trained oral historian, has been documenting oral traditions in the community since his arrival at the University of South Alabama. Students in Professor Jay Fiskio’s Environmental Studies courses first began partnering with Africatown in 2014, and since then the community has warmly welcomed generations of Oberlin students. Community historians have mentored student researchers and invited students to learn the history of Africatown through oral history interviews. Currently, Dr. Jackson is co-PI on an NSF grant
focused on responsible research with environmental justice communities with faculty from Oberlin and Tennessee State University, and Ms. Davis and Dr. Jackson are co-PIs with Professor Fiskio on an application to the Mellon Foundation for environmental justice studies with faculty from Pennsylvania State University. The panelists will talk about some of the many vectors of their longstanding and iterative community-based research and teaching collaborations.

Panelists:

Jay Fiskio, Professor and Director of Environmental Studies, Chair of Food Studies, Oberlin College

Ms. Joycelyn Davis, co-founder and Vice-President of the Clotilda Descendants Association and organizer of the Spirit of Our Ancestors Festival

Dr. Kern Jackson, co-writer and co-producer of the documentary film Descendant, Associate Professor & Director of the African American Studies Program, University of South Alabama

Kai Vera Menafee, a senior at Oberlin College majoring in Africana Studies and Dance, with a minor in Environmental Studies and concentration in Education

Dr. Anu Ramaswami, Sanjay Swani ’87 Professor of India Studies, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, and the High Meadows Environmental Institute will provide commentary.

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

“Research Universities as Partners in Community-Engaged Scholarship”

Reception & Keynote Address by Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark and President-elect of Hunter College

Remarks by:

Professor D. Vance Smith, Department of English;

Dana Hughes Moorhead, Friends of Princeton Open Space (FOPOS);

Jalen Travis ‘24, Football, Truman Scholar, Anthropology, African American Studies, ProCES Student Advisory Board
Nancy Cantor recently was announced as the new President of Hunter College of the City University of New York, effective August 12, 2024. Currently serving as Chancellor of Rutgers University – Newark, she is recognized nationally and internationally for emphasizing the role of universities as anchor institutions in their communities, especially by forging diverse, cross-sector collaboratives and leveraging publicly engaged scholarship to advance racial equity and equitable growth. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and member of the National Academy of Medicine, she previously led Syracuse University and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and was provost at the University of Michigan, where she was closely involved in the defense of affirmative action in 2003 Supreme Court cases Grutter and Gratz. She co-chairs the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration Steering Committee and the Anchor Institutions Task Force Advisory Council, and co-edits the book series *Our Compelling Interests* from Princeton University Press with Earl Lewis. She has received the Robert Zemsky Medal for Innovation in Higher Education; American Council on Education Reginald Wilson Diversity Leadership Award; Frank W. Hale, Jr. Diversity Leadership Award from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education; Anti-Defamation League Woman of Achievement Award; National Council for Research on Women Making a Difference for Women Award; and 2008 Carnegie Corporation Academic Leadership Award, one of higher education’s highest honors.

Friday, April 5, 2024

PRINCETON’S INAUGURAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH INSTITUTE

9:00 AM- Noon

“Food Justice and Oral History”

*Sponsored by the Derian Student Internship Fund, School of Public & International Affairs (SPIA), Princeton Humanities Council, Princeton Alliance for Collaborative Research & Innovation, Princeton Food Project, Department of Anthropology*

Location: Carl A. Fields Center
A gathering of academic and community scholar-practitioners to elevate outstanding community-engaged research, teaching, and mentored-undergraduate research focusing on The Heirloom Gardens Project, the institute provides a forum for exchanging knowledge, collaboration, and building coalitions rooted in rigorous scholarship and commitments to systems change. The gathering also serves as the launch of the 2024 Derian Summer Internship Program, a faculty-mentored, community-engaged undergraduate research program.

The Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project (HGP) is a collaboration of Princeton University, Spelman College, and the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance to collect oral histories of people who have worked to preserve Black and Indigenous seed and foodways throughout the Southeastern United States and Appalachia. It is currently funded by the Princeton Alliance for Collaborative Research and Innovation, an initiative of the Office of the Dean for Research at Princeton University. Working across six sites over two years, students and faculty will work with communities to interview and archive the stories of farmers, gardeners, chefs, community organizers, local historians and others who have been actively sustaining rich farming, culinary, and medicinal traditions. To date, HGP has collected over seventy interviews and is currently processing the files to be deposited in the oral history archive at Spelman College and hosted for public access by Atlanta University Center’s Woodruff Library. HGP is also developing a story corp training kit that Ujamaa and other community organizations can use to continue conducting oral histories for the project after the initial funding expires. HGP intends to continue its work in other regions of the country and to support collection and archiving of oral histories on this topic for years to come.
This timeline is drawn from interviews and research produced by Dr. Richard Anderson *18, in March 2024. It is by no means comprehensive. As ProCES pursues the ongoing project of documenting the program’s history and situating our work in the global field of Community-Engaged Scholarship, we invite community partners, faculty, staff, and alumni to contribute to this effort.
Contact Tania Boster tania.boster@princeton.edu to share content.

Visit https://proces.princeton.edu/about/program-history to learn more about the many faculty, community partners, and students who have shaped ProCES over the past quarter century.

1989: Members of the Princeton Class of 1955 establish Project 55 to foster public service opportunities for Princeton undergraduates. The non-profit Project 55 provides funding and administrative support for the community-engaged student internships and coursework. One of the founders, Ralph Nader ’55, plants the seed for Project ’55 at an April 1989 class reunion in Washington, DC during which he challenges the assembled alumni to harness their substantial knowledge and professional influence to “grapple with the nation’s problems.”

1997: A group of Princeton undergraduates, including representatives of the Student Volunteer Council, create an ad-hoc committee to press for more experiential learning courses at the university. The committee includes current Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs Jennifer Jennings ’00. In the same year, Princeton University receives a three-year Learn and Serve Grant from the Federal Corporation for National Service. Managed by the Bonner Foundation, the grant supports the creation of community-based research courses and projects at Princeton and more than a dozen other campuses across the United States. “Looking to the future, the Daily Princetonian editorialized, “an expanded program of service-based courses would fit appropriately into the University’s permanent curriculum.”

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1998: A group of Princeton undergraduates create Students for Community Based Learning to support community based learning. The students seek out potential faculty partners to teach community-based learning courses.\(^3\) Two undergraduate summer interns—Jennifer Jennings ‘00 and Sujohn Sarkar ‘00—assisted in developing what would soon become Community-Based Learning Initiative (CBLI).\(^4\)

1999: The University creates the Community-Based Learning Initiative to coordinate distribution of the Learn and Serve Grant funds. In the same year, Project 55 launches the “Experiential Education Initiative” to support coursework that incorporates community-based research. Project 55 staff member Mary Miller serves as liaison to the University’s Community-Based Learning Initiative (CBLI), connecting community partners and faculty members.\(^5\) More than 125 students in six CBLI-affiliated courses complete community-based learning projects or papers during the Spring 1999 semester.\(^6\)

2000: Trisha Thorme joins Princeton as coordinator of the Community-Based Learning Initiative.

2002: Professor Kathryn Watterson and her students join partners from Princeton’s Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood at Princeton Public Library for a public presentation about their ongoing CBLI-supported oral history project on the borough’s historic African American community. The project continues for many years with support from CBLI and other entities.\(^7\)

Trisha Thorme receives the 2002 Experiential Education Rising Leader Award from the National Society for Experiential Education.\(^8\)

2003: Kerry Strand, Sam Marullo, Nick Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, and Patrick Donohue publish *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices*, drawing on lessons learned from community-based research sponsored by the Bonner Foundation.

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colleges and universities nationwide, including Princeton. The book highlights CBLI’s work and signals that CBLI had placed Princeton at the forefront of the still-emerging field of community-engaged scholarship.⁹

2006: CBLI receives a $1.3 million Learn and Serve Grant from the federal government’s Corporation for National and Community Service to expand its course offerings while also leading the National Community-Based Networking Initiative, a consortium of 20 institutions working to establish their own community-based research programs. The grant, running from 2007 to 2010, further distinguishes Princeton as a national leader in community-engaged scholarship.¹⁰

2009: A research team led by CBLI (with support from the 2007-2010 Learn and Serve grant) develops a survey to assess student learning outcomes for academic community-based research.¹¹

2013: Maria Lockwood joins CBLI as program coordinator.

2015: “The Final Report of the Service and Civic Engagement Self-Study Task Force” frames service and civic engagement as “integral both to the education that Princeton provides its students and to the realization of the University’s own mission in society.” The task force urges the University to embrace service and civic engagement as a “core value that becomes an embedded and pervasive lens within a Princeton education.”¹²

2016: A Community-Based Learning (CBL) attribute is added to designate CBLI courses in the official catalog.

2018: CBLI changes its name to the Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES), establishing the place of community-based learning in Princeton’s curriculum.

2021: Tara Carr-Lemke joins ProCES as associate director.

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¹¹ See item in draft timeline supplied by Maria.
2022: Trisha Thorme steps down as director of ProCES.

2022: Tania Boster is appointed director of ProCES.

2023: The Program in Theater & Music Theater launches a Minor that includes a Community-Engaged Theater track.\textsuperscript{13}

2024: ProCES hosts Princeton’s inaugural Community-Engaged Research Institute, a gathering of academic and community scholar-practitioners to elevate outstanding community-engaged research, teaching, and mentored-undergraduate research.

\textsuperscript{13} https://arts.princeton.edu/academics/theater/theater-minor/
Special thanks to all who helped to make this event possible

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