

African American Studies Program (AFAM)



Gambrell Hall is home to the African American Studies Program at the University of South Carolina.

The University of South Carolina's African American Studies (AFAM) program is one of the top programs in the Southern region of the United States. It came to claim this position through the hard work of the individuals who sought to create this program.

In 1968 Tom Terrill offered the University of South Carolina the option to register for a "Negro History" course he would be teaching due to the demands promoted by the Association of Afro-American students in their 13-point plan the group presented to administrators. The class ended up being introduced under the title, "The Negro in American History." Two of Terrill's students, Luther Battiste and Harry Wright, attended this course and were asked to join a Committee for Curriculum to hopefully expand Terrill's course into a program at the university.

By the summer of 1969, Battiste and Wright presented a proposal to create a Black Studies program at the university. By 1971 the proposal had been ratified and established at the university. Now that Wright and Battiste had established the program, they were in need of finding a director. They ultimately chose Willie Harriford, who proved to be an essential piece to the program's success in the beginning. By the 1980s, students were able to declare a major in AFAM. However, by the 1990s, there was a decline in the program, but staff and faculty fought to make sure the program stayed available to students. The program was refreshed through the efforts of the staff, faculty, and student leaders within the program.



The State, n.d.

Willie Harriford was appointed as the first Director of the African American Studies Program. He served as Director from 1971 to 1986.



UofSC, n.d.

Qiana J. Whitted, Ph.D., is the current Director of the African American Studies Program since 2018.



Panorama, 2013

Luther Battiste, J.D., helped create a proposal for the AFAM program in 1969 after being asked by Tom Terrill to join the Committee for Curriculum Revision.



The State, 2017

Harry Wright assisted in the creation of AFAM and served as its third director for the program.

Sources & Additional Information

Sources

- Photo 1 – [Gambrell Hall](#)
- Photo 2 – [Willie Harriford](#)
- Photo 3 – [Qiana J. Whitted](#)
- Photo 4 - [Luther Battiste](#)
- Photo 5 – [Harry Wright](#)
- Willie L. Harriford Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. [Link](#)
- Jackson, R. (2021). Peace, Love, Education, and Liberation: The Black Campus Movement at the University of South Carolina. *Invisible No More: The African American Experience at The University of South Carolina*. 131–155. [Link](#)

Additional Information

- [Presidential Commission on University History: Willie Harriford](#)
- [Building Our Program – African American Studies Program](#)
- [Luther Battiste recalls his role in UofSC student protest in May 1970](#)
- [USC African American Studies Program – Facebook](#)
- [African American Studies Program celebrating 50th Anniversary](#)
- [Statement from the Consortium of Chairs and Director of Black Studies in the Southeastern Conference](#)
- Rogers, I.H. (2012). The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965–1970. *Journal of African American Studies*, 16, 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-011-9173-2>