

Note from the Director

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2020 has been a difficult year. We are still deep in the throes of a global pandemic and a global economic downturn. Because of structural racism, COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting Black and brown communities in the U.S. and around the world. In addition, we have been shaken by a recent spate of brutal murders of Black people by the police and white vigilantes. This racial violence is deeply entrenched in social structures and institutions and rooted in the system of racial plantation slavery and its corollaries, Jim Crow violence, and the prison industrial complex that targets African and African-descended people. This occurs alongside the perpetual injustices against Indigenous communities across the Americas, who have suffered genocide, land theft, and structural racism as well. The protests against police violence, white supremacy, racial terror, racism, and anti-Blackness have engulfed us, motivated us, excited us, and in the era of COVID-19, also concerned us.

In this somber and uncertain context, it feels strange commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Black Studies Program at Providence College. In 1995, a group of student activists and their faculty allies came together and pushed for Black Studies to be established as a formal program at PC. They recognized the gaps and structural problems in the curriculum and on the campus more broadly and fought to remedy them. 25 years later, Black Studies at Providence

College remains needed now just as much as it was needed when it was started. The program remains committed to promoting and encouraging scholarship that challenges multiple forms of oppression within the U.S. and globally, encouraging students to critically think of knowledge production, and arming them with the necessary tools to critique such production. These skills, the community-building that Black Studies engages in, and the space it creates to elevate the voices of marginalized people on our campus, in our community, and throughout the world are needed now more than ever in the era of COVID-19 and mass movements to end all forms of racial, economic, social injustice, and oppression. Thus, as we commemorate 25 years of Black Studies at Providence College, our theme Remembrance, Resistance, and Revolution, speaks directly to the events of this time.

Instead of organizing in-person events this year, Black Studies is hosting a virtual year-long series to engage, discuss, and act around the major issues that continue to impact Black and other marginalized communities. Our program stands in solidarity with those protesting against white supremacy, anti-Blackness, and racial oppression in the U.S. and around the world. We honor the lives of those who were murdered and/or maimed at the hands of law enforcement and white vigilantes. We reassert our commitment to the Black Studies mission, to prepare our students to tackle the challenges of 2020 and beyond, and to equip them to act, to transform, to create, to shape, to influence, and to build a better, more equitable, and more just world.

As you interact with the various pieces within this issue of the Heritage, we invite you to read them as expressions and explorations of our theme - Remembrance, Resistance, Revolution - and connect them with Black Diasporic agency, creativity, and self-determination. In Solidarity.