

# Note from the Director

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Last year, our campus was filled with protest and demands for a more just and equitable community. Students of color and their allies raised issues of identity and belonging and how as a community we create an environment that not simply recognizes differences in the abstract, but instead seeks to create substantive inclusion that is built on justice and equity. Students, faculty and staff protested in an attempt to resist dominant narratives and practices, but also to offer their imagination of a community that values and protects their humanity—one that allows them to simultaneously survive and thrive.

In 1995 a dedicated group of students and faculty organized to create the Black Studies Program. They argued that the identities of some were missing on our campus, particularly in the curriculum. In 2015 a coalition of students, faculty and staff once again asked this question—Where are Black, Brown, LGBTQ, immigrants and other “marginalized” voices in the curriculum? This suggests that while we have made some progress, there is room for us to grow.

In our first issue of *Heritage*, the various authors pick up on many of the central themes that undergird student protest not only on our campus but nationwide. They also grapple with many of the issues that 1995 group confronted. The themes that travel through these various spaces and times are: identity, resistance and agency. These are themes that are long standing in the African Diasporic struggles for freedom.

As you engage the various articles that make up the *Heritage*, we invite you to read them as contemporary explorations of the above themes while considering them alongside longstanding Diasporic Black assertions of self-articulation and agency.

May we all move, together, to a place of justice and freedom.  
Ashe!