



John Nicholas Brown  
Center for Public Humanities  
and Cultural Heritage  
BROWN UNIVERSITY

***Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan  
2019-2020 Summary Update***

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**1. Please describe your DDIAP goals, actions, and outcomes from the 2019-2020 academic year related to the following areas:**

**a. People: increasing representation among, and retaining, historically underrepresented groups. (As applicable, please comment on each of the following constituent groups: faculty, undergraduate students, master students, doctoral students, medical students, postdoctoral fellows, and staff.)**

We define historically underrepresented groups to include African-American, Latinx, Native American, and international (including Asian American) students, postdoctoral fellows, staff and faculty members. As of May 2020, 40% of the total number of all JNBC students, postdoctoral fellows, staff and faculty members come from historically underrepresented groups. This breaks out into the following:

- MA Students as of May 2020, including the Classes of '20 and '21: 48% (12/25). Not counting international or Asian American students: 32%.
- Postdoctoral Fellows as of May 2020: 50% (1/2). Not counting international or Asian American Fellows: 50%.
- Staff: 17% (.5/3: one staff member is half-Korean and identifies as half-Korean, half-American). Not counting international or Asian American staff: 0%.
- Faculty Members: 22% (2/9). Not counting international or Asian American faculty members: 11%.

Over the past five years, we have focused in particular on recruiting and retaining students from underrepresented groups. We are proud that we have consistently reached or surpassed the goal we set for ourselves in our last DIAP of having 25% of our entering MA class be members of underrepresented groups. 67% of the 2020 graduating class (12 students, including 10 MA students and 2 PhD students getting MA degrees and certificates), come from underrepresented groups. 57% of the 2019 graduating class (19 students, including 14 MA students and 5 PhD students getting MA degrees and certificates) come from underrepresented groups. 67% of the MA cohort that has just been admitted and will graduate in 2022 (12 MA students) come from underrepresented groups.

We believe that we are able to achieve the high level of diversity in our student body due in part to the two fellowships we co-sponsor with the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative, each of which provides an incoming MA student with full tuition, summer funding, and a paid 15-hour/week position working with those departments' staff on programming (more on these below).

*URM students by graduating class (5 years)*

	<b>2021 12 MA*</b>	<b>2021 2 PhD^</b>	<b>2020 13 MAs</b>	<b>2020 2 PhDs</b>	<b>2019 14 MAs</b>	<b>2019 5 PhDs</b>	<b>2018 10 MAs</b>	<b>2018 2 PhDs</b>	<b>2017 10 MAs</b>	<b>2017 2 PhDs</b>
<b>African American</b>	1 (8 %) Branch	1 Brown	2 (15%) Marshall, White	0	3 (21%) Arnold, Jackson, Obenda	1 Jones	0	0	1 (10%) Brown	0
<b>Latinx</b>	1 (8%) Francisco		1 (8%) Parker-Guerrero	1 Rodriguez	0	1 Maldonado	3 (30%) Garcia-Mosquera, Maestas, Santana	1 Sintetos	0	1 Cortez
<b>Native American</b>	2 (17%) Kuruhara Martin		1 (8%) Payer	0	1 (7%) Robbins	0	0	0	0	0
<b>International</b>	1 (8%) Zhang		3 (23%) Huang, Lin, Zhang	0	2 (14%) Jiang, Thiagarajan	0	1 (10%) Garcia-Mosquera	1 Feng	1 (10%) Zwart	0

\*Students who received terminal Master’s degrees in Public Humanities.

^American Studies PhD Students who received transitional Master’s degrees in Public Humanities.

**b. Curriculum & Academic Excellence: expanding or enhancing the curriculum, courses, or concentrations, as well as any initiatives related to power, privilege, inequality, and social justice. To what extent have inclusive practices and pedagogy been utilized? (For those directing centers or institutes, please use your own discretion in describing how your unit addressed all or part of these prompts during the academic year.)**

Through its coursework and its innovative programs, the JNBC aims to be a campus-wide leader in centering diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice in the work that we do as a community. We consider diversity as a matter of course when we develop our slate of programs, with more than half of our paid speakers and panelists including people of color and members of the LGBTQ community in the 2019-20 year. Every single one of our public programs addressed issues that relate to race, indigeneity, equity and justice, and we believe that our courses are field leaders in the extent to which they examine these issues through readings, research and final projects. Many of our students’ final course projects are developed with community partners that are led by, and that serve BIPOC communities as well.

*Curriculum*

In the 2019-20 academic year, several American Studies courses taught by Adjunct Lecturers hired directly by the JNBC, JNBC Postdoctoral Fellows and by JNBC Faculty Fellows in the American Studies Department focused on issues central to diversity and inclusion. In these courses, weekly readings and assignments engaged with issues of justice, equity and inclusion on a weekly basis throughout the entirety of the course, as did final papers and course projects. These include:

- ETHN 1650f: Mapping Violence (DIAP Course). Monica Martinez, Associate Professor, American Studies, and Jim McGrath, Postdoctoral Fellow in Digital Humanities at the JNBC. Students in this course contributed original research to Mapping Violence, a digital humanities project that aims to

expose interconnected histories of violence, the legacies of colonization, slavery, and genocide that intersect in Texas in the early twentieth century by mapping the lynchings of Mexican-Americans. Readings examined legacies of colonization and slavery in the US, data and histories of racial violence, and methods of public engagement around issues of racial violence.

- AMST 2635: Ethical in Public: Humanities as Moments of Encountering. Diane O'Donoghue, Adjunct Lecturer at the JNBC. This course explored the theories and praxis of ethics with respect to alterity, racism and public memory; case studies included a museum to victims of political mass murder in Ethiopia and a destroyed Jewish cemetery in Vienna.
- AMST 2655: Against Invisibility: Asian America/s, Collective Memory and the Public Humanities. Robert Lee, Associate Professor, American Studies and Faculty Fellow, JNBC. This course considered ways in which Asian Americans have used vernacular photography to archive collective memory, resist state surveillances, assert subjectivity, and narrate alternate histories; its final course project was the construction of a digital exhibition on vernacular Asian American photography.
- AMST 2694: UnSettling Public Humanities. Micah Salkind, Adjunct Lecturer at the JNBC. The aim of this course was to decenter experiences and cultural expectations attendant to whiteness, cismaleness, able-bodiedness, heterosexuality, and middle/upper-classness in the Public Humanities. Readings and assignments explored museum and archival practices, gentrification, activism, performance art, and oral history through the lens of decolonization.

In addition, the following class projects from courses taught in the 2019-20 academic year at the JNBC explored issues of justice, equity and inclusion during focused weeks on these themes. These include:

- AMST 1903i: Museum Histories: readings related to the Black museum movement, Indigenous museums and to community engagement practices over two weeks of the class.
- AMST 1903z: Shrine, House or Home: final collaborative project with the Lippitt House Museum involved research and the creation of an interpretive website to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment.
- AMST 2220d: Museums in Their Communities: readings related to decolonizing and deaccessioning museum collections over one week.
- AMST 2540: Methods in Public Humanities: readings related to diversifying non-profit boards; decolonizing philanthropy, museum and archival practices; inclusive museum practice; and critical heritage studies over six weeks of the course.
- AMST 2650: Introduction to Public Humanities: readings related to Brown's work on slavery and justice, "white power," Black memory, decolonizing archives and museums, spatial justice, and Black urban place-making over seven weeks of the class.
- AMST 2653: Public Art: History, Theory, and Practice: readings related to social practice art and activism over one week of the class.
- AMST 2697: Museum Interpretation Practices: readings related to the decolonization of museum collections and the politics of museum practice with regards to race over four weeks of the course.

## Programs

During this past academic year, JNBC programs that expanded our Center's commitment to diversity and inclusion included the following:

- *Public Humanities Now: New Voices, New Directions*, our academic-year lunch-time speaker series brought fourteen speakers to share works in progress with JNBC students, faculty and fellows. Eight of the 14 speakers (57%) were part of the BIPOC community; the presentations covered projects and topics such as the Narragansett Food Sovereignty Initiative, Indigenous Hawaiian Activism, Queer Histories at Rhode Island College and in New York City, Community Archives, and Latinx Cultural Organizations on the Lower East Side of New York.
- *Radical Cartography Now* (Sep 27, 2019), a conference on social justice approaches to mapping, included presentations on projects mapping racial violence and civil rights violations, Latinx histories in Rhode Island, sites associated with the Tulsa Race Massacre, and on the use of mapping in social practice art co-created with diverse communities. One goal of the conference was to consider new work that decolonizes map-making practices and knowledge. Eleven of the 18 speakers (61%) were part of the BIPOC community.
- *Siempre Esperando: Remittances and Their False Promise in El Salvador* (Nov 15, 2019 - Feb 5, 2020), a photography exhibition curated by American Studies PhD student Edwin Rodriguez on the social history of remittances.
- *Defiant Spirits: Fernando Brito's Sinaloa* (Feb 6, 2020 – ongoing), a documentary photography exhibition of life in Sinaloa, a province that has been wrecked by the struggle between one of the most powerful drug cartels in the world and the Mexican government. For the first time, the JNBC had all interpretive panels and labels translated into Spanish, creating our first bilingual exhibition. Public programs including gallery talks and an artist's talk were cancelled due to COVID19.
- *Hacking Heritage Unconference* (March 16, 2019), the fifth annual unconference devoted to preservation, heritage, public history and culture. Panels considered issues such as the racism of historic preservation practice, Native American mascotry, and new research and programs to make the history and legacy of slavery in Rhode Island more visible.

## Fellowships

In 2017, the JNBC welcomed the first Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative (NAISI) Fellow into the MA program – Isabella Robbins, Diné, who came to us from Stanford University with research interests in global contemporary Indigenous Art. Robbins received her MA from the JNBC in the Spring of 2019 after curating an exhibition at the Haffenreffer Museum titled *Sacred Is Sacred* earlier that year, and has gone on to do a PhD in contemporary Indigenous Art in the History of Art Department at Yale University.

The NAISI Fellowship was created in collaboration with the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative at Brown in order to expand the community of Indigenous students at the JNBC and at Brown who will contribute new research to the field of Native studies and the Public Humanities, and support the work of NAISI. It is a competitive fellowship that provides one MA student in our program each year with full tuition, summer funding, and a paid 15-hour/week position working with the NAISI program at Brown. The 2019-20 NAISI Fellows in residence at the JNBC include Taylor Payer '20 (Anishinaabe, Dartmouth College) and Rae Kuruhara '21 (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa).

Since 2009, the JNBC has offered the Public History of Slavery Fellowship in partnership with the CSSJ, providing one MA student per year with full tuition, summer funding, and a paid 15-hour/week position working with CSSJ staff on programming. To date, 10 Public History of Slavery Fellows have graduated from the program, and many of them have gone on to become field leaders in African-American public history. The 2019-20 Public History of Slavery Fellows in residence at the JNBC include Chandra Marshall '20 (Scripps College) and Breylan Martin '21 (Tlingit, Emory University).

Alumni of this program include:

- Johanna Obenda (MA'19), Cullman-Payson Fellow in Academic Affairs and Outreach, Department of Education, Yale University Art Gallery
- Sandra Arnold (MA'19), Independent Scholar
- Arielle Julia Brown (MA'17), Visiting Artist | Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- Maiyah Gamble-Rivers (MA'16), Manager of Programs & Public Engagement, Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice, Brown University
- Jazzmen Lee-Johnson (MA'15), Artist Fellow, RISD Museum
- Elon Cook Lee (MA'14), Director of Interpretation and Education, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Maria Quintero (MA'13), Outreach & Program Manager, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
- Jasmine Utsey (MA'12), Program Manager, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution
- Krystal Appiah (MA'11), Instruction Librarian, Special Collections, University of Virginia, formerly Curator of African American History at the Library Company of Philadelphia

**c. Departmental Climate & Culture: understanding and improving the departmental climate and culture.**

During the 2019-20 academic year, two postdoctoral fellows at the center, Maj Kargbo and Jim McGrath initiated a conversation with JNBC students about the historic wallpaper in the Center's main hallway. It is called "Vues d'Amérique du Nord," was designed for the French company Zuber et Cie in 1834 and installed in the house about 100 years later (and re-installed during the restoration of the early 1990s). Panoramic wallpapers such as this emerged hand in hand with the mass medium of 360-degree panorama paintings as a popular form of "travel replacement." The thirty-two panels of Zuber's "Vues d'Amerique," requiring a total of 223 different colors, were printed with 1,690 wooden blocks, each one hand carved. It brings together depictions of iconic locations, such as West Point, Niagara Falls, and Boston Harbor, and depicts a utopian (and certainly naïve) vision of a peaceful, multiracial society in the US. It is important to note that the wallpaper's creation coincides with Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, a classic document of early political science, sociology and history and an insightful analysis of US society, presented as a model for France whose revolution it had inspired. De Tocqueville condemned slavery in the strongest possible terms (but he would later also be complicit in the French colonial enterprise in North Africa).

The way African Americans and Native Americans are depicted in the wallpaper, either as partaking in leisurely activities in their Sunday dress, or performing a tribal dance for visitors, reveals ignorance or an unwillingness to engage with the reality of contemporary slave-holding America, in which the indigenous population had been decimated by genocide. Several of the depicted scenes are clearly influenced by contemporary French caricatures.

Fruitful and passionate debates ensued among the Public Humanities students, staff and faculty. Clearly the wallpaper deserved close reading and historical contextualization and it became an important tool for discussion and scholarship. The result was a nuanced, multi-pronged, sustained response, which involved most students, the entire staff and faculty at the Center as well as outside experts. The students created an online audio blog, Director Prof. Smulyan revised the Center's website to include extensive information about the wallpaper and commissioned historian and Brown alumna Prof. Joanne Pope Melish to write a report titled "Black Labor in the Making of the Nightingale Brown House," which resulted in the printing of a small brochure and a postcard available at the house for visitors.

Assistant Director Ron Potvin coordinated efforts to contextualize the wallpaper by installing an interactive touch screen computer in the front hallway that includes a self-guided tour of the Nightingale-Brown House created by students and staff and plexiglass panels in front of three sections of the wallpaper with depictions of African Americans and Native Americans, providing a critical framework and asking visitors and students to leave comments.

Assistant Director Marisa Brown received funding from the Brown Arts Initiative for three JNBC residencies for local artists of color, to commission new work that responds to the wallpaper, and received funding from the Terra Foundation for a conference (now planned for Fall 2021) that brings speakers from the worlds of academia, activism, law, the arts, and preservation to examine the range of strategies institutions are using to respond to concerns about depictions of race and indigeneity in historic public art. Marisa Brown also initiated a zoom conversation with the artist Karyn Olivier, whose work in response to a racist mural at the University of Kentucky seemed exemplary for our case.

**2. What are some successful strategies your department has employed that may be useful as case studies to inform the work of other departments at Brown seeking to realize positive results with their DDIAP work?**

Like many successful diversity and inclusion measures, this comes down in part to financial support. The CSSJ and NAISI Fellowships are immeasurably important in allowing us to recruit star students of color. In addition, the fact that the JNBC offers a 40% tuition waiver to incoming students who request it, the guarantee of a part-time job (10 hours a week) paying \$15/hour; \$3,000 summer funding; and a \$1,000 professional development fund make our MA program more attractive than competing programs to many students who come from historically underrepresented groups.

In addition, the above described process of engaging in debates about historic artifacts connected to the Center's home, has been very successful and, we believe, can serve as a useful case study.

Marisa Brown, who has run our lecture program, has made a particular effort to engage lecturers from historically underrepresented groups, and we continue along those lines throughout the coming years, both with continuing lunchtime lectures and evening events, once in-person gatherings are possible again.

**3. What challenges has your department encountered in an effort to successfully advance goals in the DDIAP? What kinds of support might be most helpful?**

At the end of the 2019-20 academic year, the JNBC lost an African-American postdoctoral fellow, Majida Kargbo, whose third year as a fellow at the JNBC was not renewed by Brown University due to COVID19-related financial restrictions. At the same time, two American Studies faculty of color, Liz Hoover and Monica Martinez, announced their departures from Brown for other universities. Hoover was a Faculty Fellow, and Martinez was also a Fellow and an active member of the JNBC community who taught one of our required courses, Introduction to Public Humanities, in the Fall of 2019. These losses make it more difficult for the JNBC to recruit, retain and support students of color, and diminish our

cultural capabilities through this loss of diversity. Once funding is restored we will make a particular effort to higher adjunct professors from underrepresented groups to teach classes.

In addition, the cost of our MA degree is high, given the fact that many of our graduates go on to work in non-profit or public institutions. If we could offer more fully funded fellowships like the CSSJ and NAISI Fellowships, we would be able to consistently recruit and retain more students of color.

**4. Please describe the process by which your department engages faculty, students, and staff in discussions about the goals, actions, and outcomes associated with your Departmental DIAP. When and how is progress related to the DDIAP communicated to the entire department?**

When the first DIAP was written, the JNBC met with groups of students, postdoctoral and faculty fellows, and staff to develop the plan. Since then, the JNBC has not convened regular meetings that include our students, faculty and staff to discuss the DIAP. We are interested in establishing a regular meeting in the future to discuss our DIAP planning and execution. Our DIAP is published on our website.

We feel that the above described process of using the historic wallpaper in the house for classroom discussions, blog posts, commissioned research and finally, several meaningful interventions is an exemplary example of how we will engage with our troubled history and its legacy.

**a. Who takes a leadership role in the ongoing DDIAP work in your unit? Please discuss ways in which the work is or can be more equitably distributed across classification status and self-identity.**

The Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of the JNBC take a leadership role. With personnel shifts, the current DIAP falls under the Assistant Director for Programs, the Center Manager, and the Director.

**b. Does your department have a DDIAP Committee? If so, please list the name and title of each member, describe the role of the committee, and how often they meet.**

No, we do not have a DIAP Committee, but will look into forming such a Committee during the 2020-21 academic year.

**5. Please list any trainings in which members of your department participated that have been materially useful in informing the work of your DDIAP during the 2019-2020 academic year.**

Three of our staff members attended the virtual training on June 18, 2020 titled “Overcoming Barriers and Promoting Black Graduate Student Success,” which was very helpful. No other such trainings were offered by Brown University that we were aware of during the 2019-20 academic year.

**6. Since your Departmental DIAP was launched, what priorities or goals have changed? (Feel free to share what you think the impact of COVID-19 will have on your DDIAP goals and other initiatives you have or plan to implement that addresses disparities relative to the pandemic.) What emerging themes would you like to address in the next 1-3 years?**

We have begun discussing a number of new initiatives, including the following:

- Together with the NAISI and Prof. Bogues of the CSSJ (and hopefully a number of other participants, such as the Haffenreffer Museum through a Steering Committee), we hope to work with



our two NAISI Fellows to advance a report similar to Brown's Report on Slavery and Justice, which was produced by a committee on behalf of President Simmons from 2004 to 2007 and amended in 2011. This report would lay out the history of the relationship of the University to the local Native American population directly and indirectly.

- We believe that the dormant discussion about a Slavery Memorial for the State of Rhode Island deserves to be reinvigorated with a number of initiatives with the University, city and state and an international competition.
- Given the new Director's interests in architecture, urbanism, public art and history, we foresee stronger engagement in those fields. In particular, we have begun to work with colleagues at RISD on issues of housing for the urban poor in Providence and issues of spatial justice. A Public Humanities Seminar in the Spring will address those issues and be linked to a design class at RISD that will design and build a house for a low-income family in South Providence.
- We hope to broaden the connections of the JNBC across campus and beyond. A first step will be the registration of many classes in other departments as potential public humanities classes (PHUM). This will include classes in Anthropology, History of Art, Archaeology etc. with a strong focus on public space.
- Once travelling is permitted again, we will institute an annual research trip abroad in conjunction with the "Introduction to Public Humanities" class in the spring.
- We hope to place a number of our students as teaching assistants in a number of classes that deal with issues of inequality, racism, spatial justice etc.
- We anticipate a continued and even stronger involvement with Digital Humanities. Students at the center have routinely contributed essays to the Rhode Tour website, which is managed by the JNBC, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities and the Rhode Island Historical Society. In closer collaboration with the Center for Digital Scholarship we hope to continue a number of mapping projects, which the current Director had begun earlier. One of the projects will be an iPhone app about the history of Benefit Street, in particular its central role in the history of African Americans in Rhode Island.