

*African American Studies*  
**Mission Statement**

**African American Studies**, an academic discipline, encourages an intellectual approach to the study of African peoples both nationally and globally. Thus, it seeks to provide historically accurate assessments of the roles and contributions of people of African descent to America and to human history. As an interdisciplinary program, **African American Studies** offers students the opportunity to communicate more effectively across cultural lines, as well as explore the social, political, and economic reality of black experiences in the United States.

In addition, the program encourages creative research, the acquisition of practical experience, and the development of intellectual expertise in African American Studies. Moreover, the goals of the African American Studies Program are quite compatible with the University's Mission, especially its commitment to academic excellence.

The core characteristics of **African American Studies** include:

- a commitment to promoting a positive, healthy intellectual exchange of knowledge and information, making a study of African and African American culture and history most challenging, refreshing and ultimately rewarding;
- a commitment to serving a diverse student population, consisting of students of all racial, ethnic, and cultural origins;
- a commitment to ensuring that the college community and the region at large be well informed through AFAM sponsored film festivals, Annual AFA Lecture Series, the Annual Multicultural Sankofa Celebration, public workshops, and program publications;
- a commitment to enhancing students' awareness and appreciation of the artistic work that comprises an African American cultural heritage, and contributes to the multicultural development of the region at large;
- a commitment to developing new courses in several disciplines, including English, Journalism, Sociology, Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Political Science, History, Women's & Gender Studies, and the Fine Arts.

With increased course offerings comes the inevitable creation of area concentrated, individualized programs of study. One ultimate goal, then, is for **African American Studies** to serve as a research and resource unit for Valdosta State University, the Lowndes County/Valdosta communities, and the Region.

Shirley H. Hardin, Academic Director  
African American Studies

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