



Advocacy & Activism

Forging a Legacy of Advocacy & Activism

THE ADAMS INTERCULTURAL CENTER

BY BILAL AKEEM '28



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES



ADAMS

**INTERCULTURAL
CENTER**





In tracing the history of the Adams Intercultural Center (AIC), there is much more to find than the history of a single building on the Hobart and William Smith campus. The Center’s history is linked to the history of student activism and the Colleges’ efforts in promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Adams Intercultural Center’s trajectory reflects a history of decades-long conversations on the evolving meaning of student leadership, identity, and culture, as well as equity and social justice. Most importantly, the Adams Intercultural Center has always been, from the very start, an open place for anyone to come and join in the forging of its history.

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SHANEIA '16 Mayra '17 Josh M '18 Polly ♥ Danielle '15 DAYANA

LA * DJENEBA '20 * SIMA'S GEN '15

CHAYON '15 BRADLEY '18 RICHIE LILLY '15 Amber

A '14 NATE '17 Josiah '19 SHWETA NANYA OBEYE RO

SHAN '16 Jackeline '19 孙承希 GARTH

STACEY '19 LIFE IS GOOD

SHAMAR CHRIS SQUAD KEEP PUSHING DIM

JESS '20 KEELY '13 SHANNON DR '17

GABBY '12 何承希 EMORY KEVIN

Neill '15 Eliss M '14 Prince ♥ Sima '15 Kiana '13 SP

S. PEREZ '15 DANE Star ♥ VERONICA '08 RIDORE

- Jolyon Victoria '14 My love the IC - Barry '10 King

NATALIA JOSH M. DANT THE

VICE '15 CANESHIA LINDA '21

LYNN NAG

RESPECT JADE '12

DANIELLE KATIE

KWAME HAMDANI '20 Sha

IN SHOO '18 KENDER '22 LANA

KEN GIZEM '21 MIA '19

TY 2300 LESLY LUTY '14 ♥

VICKA FIVE ASU LANA

ERIK '19 SAMMY '20 MOMO '19

LTURS COMING SPRING 2019 PHYLO

FOREWORD



I met Director Alejandra Molina in August of 2023, when I was looking for internship opportunities at the Adams Intercultural Center. She generously offered me the chance to research the history of the Center. I did not realize how positive an experience this project would be at the time. Now, I cannot begin to describe how grateful I am for that opportunity, and how much I cherish all the work we have done. From working on this project, I have gained a new perspective on the need for the Adams Intercultural Center on campus, as well as gaining invaluable skills by performing archival research, public speaking, writing and interviewing.

Whether it was spending hours at the Archives, interviewing alumni and staff, or researching and writing this booklet, this project has been a journey. Now that it has reached its end, I have come to appreciate the full scope of what the Adams Intercultural Center and its history represent. From all the historical material I have reviewed, and the people I interviewed for the project, I have seen how the idea, structure and purpose of the Adams Intercultural Center has grown and evolved from the distant past to the current day. One constant that has remained since the Center's founding, four names and 54 years ago, is its welcoming, inclusive and diverse environment.

It must also be said that this space was started and always championed by students who may not have had a space otherwise. They persevered and dedicated themselves to resisting marginalization through the establishment of the Center. The Adams Intercultural Center remains a necessary space that allows students to advocate for themselves, and to build community and solidarity. The Center's history is filled with inspiring and fascinating stories, all available within the Archives.

I am honored to have been given the opportunity to play a part in cataloguing the history of the Adams Intercultural Center, and hope that I have done that remarkable history justice.

Bilal Akeem '28



Ronald F. Reed, the College's first Black administrator, 1969.

I

P L E D G E S & C O M M I T M E N T S

L A T E 1 9 6 0 s T O E A R L Y 1 9 7 0 s



“I, Beverley D. Causey Jr., President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, promise to exercise fully my power and authority as head of these colleges to assist each and every minority group student to pursue his academic and nonacademic goals, and to create an environment void of racial hostilities for the attainment of these goals. I further promise that I will be available at any time for dialogue with any minority group student or coalition of students.”

Text of the oath signed on January 19, 1970, by
Interim President Beverley D. Causey Jr. ¹

Beginning in the late '60s, a tumultuous mood gripped the country, and Hobart and William Smith, like many other colleges and universities, was no exception. On campus, the primary concern for students at the time was self-determination and anti-war activism. HWS had already been involved with the

struggle for civil rights, hosting a chapter of the Northern Student Movement, as well as multiple symposia on racial issues.² The years leading to and around the 1970s were a flashpoint of unrest unlike any that came before. However, with unrest, change came.

1. HWS Archives and Special Collections, Committee on Minority Group Students 1970-1971

2. The Northern Student Movement was a civil rights organization founded in the northeastern US, which had a particular focus on tutoring and community engagement both in Geneva and throughout the country. - Echo & Pine 1964; *The Herald* 13 March 1964; *The Herald* 3 February 1967; *The Herald* 5 April 1968



Diane-Louise Kenney '70

In the summer of 1968, the President of the Colleges, Albert E. Holland, had been made to resign. Among other cited differences, Holland had permitted vocal student activism and allowed outspoken anti-war speakers at the Colleges, causing friction between himself and the Board of Trustees.³ Prior to his resignation, Holland had a one-on-one meeting with a Black William Smith student named Diane-Louise Kenney '70, who encouraged him to increase enrollment of students of color, a policy he had planned to enact before his resignation.⁴ Despite an occasionally contentious relationship with students, Holland was regarded as a progressive president, and there was concern that some of his efforts to diversify and empower the student body would be undone by the interim president and former Provost, Beverly D. Causey.⁵

To ensure that progress continued, the few students of color on campus would play a direct role in increasing enrollment by volunteering in Admissions and working with administrative committees. As a result, 1968 would see the highest number of students of color (16) enrolled in the history of the Colleges up until that point. Fourteen of those students admitted in the fall of 1968 would form the first organization for students of color on campus, the United Blacks of Hobart and William Smith.⁶ Like many similar groups at the time in the country, they pushed for more support, a more diverse campus, and a Black Studies program. They received backing from members of the Faculty and Administration, who submitted a proposal to the Board of Trustees titled: "A Commitment to the Education of Minority-Group Students."⁷

In response to the proposal, the Colleges' Board of Trustees passed a resolution to further increase the enrollment of students of color. Soon after, Causey's administration recognized that recruitment was only one part of creating an inclusive environment and formed a committee to ensure students would be supported as they adjusted to life on campus and thrived academically.⁸ In 1969, the Colleges' first Black administrator, Ronald F. Reed, was hired. That year, the Colleges would also make plans to join the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).⁹ In response to a planned increase in enrollment of students of color after these efforts, the administration also understood the need for a space for students of color and bought a house on 412 Pulteney St. to be used for that purpose.

3. Daniel Joseph Berrigan SJ and Dick Gregory - *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle* 14 August 1968

4. Interview with Ms. Lillian Collins & Beth Henderson, December 19, 2023; Pulteney Street Survey Spring 2020; *The Herald* 27 September 1968; *The Herald* 9 October 1968

5. *The Herald* 27 September 1968; *The Herald* 9 October 1968

6. *The Geneva Times* 30 April 1971

7. Minority Affairs President's Standing Committee, 1978-1979 HWS Archives & Special Collections

8. Committee On Minority-Group Students 1970-1971 – HWS Archives & Special Collections

9. The Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) provides a broad range of services to New York State residents who, because of educational and economic circumstances, would otherwise be unable to attend a postsecondary educational institution. – (nysed.gov)

In early 1970, a member of the United Blacks, David Arthur '72, peacefully interrupted a matriculation ceremony held by acting President Causey and implored him to sign an oath committing to students of color, which he did enthusiastically. Later that year, the United Blacks of Hobart and William Smith would change their name to the Third World Coalition and in October, the house on 412 Pulteney would become the Minority Culture Center, headquarters for the Third World Coalition, a space students would refer to as "Little Harlem" during this early period.¹⁰

The Center was immensely significant as one of the only places specifically meant for students of color on campus. As explained by Terry Smith '80, a Hobart alumnus and former member of the Third World Coalition, "As a day-to-day function, it was a place where people [could] come and hang out and see each other for help. For other students, it was a place where they actually lived."¹¹ At this time, students were responsible for the Center's maintenance and utilization. Furthermore, students requested extensions to the Center, including a meeting room and recreational area. After those renovations, students would make full use of the Center. They hosted parties and display cultural art and literature. From the start, the Center was open to all, with an effort made by members of the Third World Coalition to make themselves more visible by advertising their mission statement, their events, and the Center in the local newspaper, the *Geneva Times*.¹² They also raised awareness in the Colleges' own newspaper, *The Herald*, which

would publish coverage of their initiatives and ideas throughout the years.¹³

Every event was organized by members of the Third World Coalition themselves, who initially had to request financial support directly from the Administration, later receiving funding from their respective Student Governments.¹⁴ Though the Center was too small for hosting campus-wide events, it would find use as a reception area for speakers and events, and occasional open houses. One prominent event held by the Third World Coalition was the Afro-Latin weekend. These events would include workshops, art exhibits, film screenings, picnics, music, poetry and speakers.¹⁵

However, despite many of the commitments made from 1968 onwards, it is important to recognize that outside of the small HEOP Office in Sherrill Hall, not much other support was given to students of color at the time.

Students had to be vocal if the Colleges were not living up to their commitment to the education and wellbeing of students of color. In addition, the Center lacked visibility, and regardless of students' efforts to organize and publicize programs and events, the house remained invisible to most of the campus, and it was perceived primarily as the "Minority House." In fact, attendance at Afro-Latin Weekend events was primarily made up of Geneva residents, instead of HWS students.¹⁶ Progress was occurring, but it was still slow-moving and uneven.

10. These names may strike us as odd today, but at the time, they were expressions of a distinct identity, separate from the typical moniker of minority but inclusive to all marginalized students.

11. Interview with Terry Smith, October 27, 2023

12. *The Geneva Times* 16 October 1970; *The Geneva Times* 30 1971; *The Geneva Times* 12 May 1972

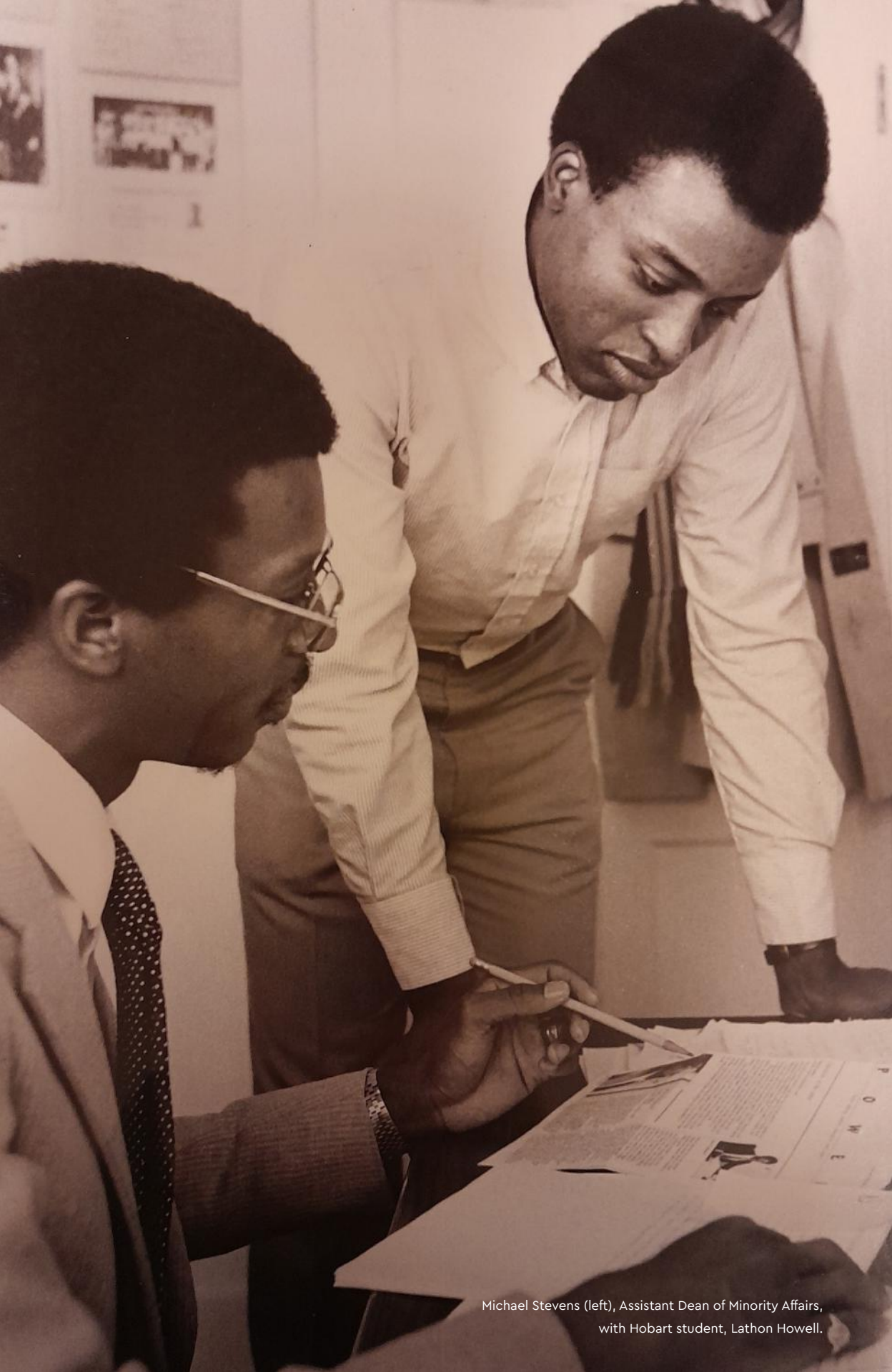
13. *The Herald* 16 October 1970; 7 May 1971

14. Committee On Minority-Group Students 1970-1971 - HWS Archives & Special Collections

15. Some notable people invited to the weekends were New York State Assemblyman Arthur Eve, founder of the HEOP,

Walter Rodney, author of "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" and poet and singer Gil Scott-Heron, author of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised."

16. *The Herald* 4 May 1973



Michael Stevens (left), Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs,
with Hobart student, Lathon Howell.

I I

P R O G R E S S , A W A R E N E S S
A N D V I S I B I L I T Y

M I D 1 9 7 0 s T O M I D - 1 9 8 0 s

*“It was the Minority Cultural Center, but to us,
we just called it ‘The House.’”*

Terry Smith '80¹

Compared to the volatile environment of the early 1970s, these years were quite calm. The Third World Coalition settled into a less militant stance, instead choosing to make themselves heard through advocacy and events. Allan A. Kuusisto had been inaugurated as the new President of the Colleges in 1970, and the HEOP staff would be expanded with the addition of James Henderson '75 in 1971, who held an associate's degree and was working as a counselor in Geneva schools. He earned a bachelor's from Hobart in 1975.

Most activities relating to students of color were overseen by the newly created Office of Minority Affairs, a necessary expansion to the existing HEOP program. The mandate of the Office was broad, involving Admissions, Outreach, Counseling, and Financial Aid. By 1974, Edward Blackwell would take

over from Ronald Reed as the Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs. Under his and counselor James Henderson's leadership, the Office encouraged and supported more student involvement, and worked to create a welcoming environment for incoming students of color.

One of the important initiatives held by the HEOP under the Office of Minority Affairs were its summer programs, which functioned as a valuable orientation, taking students on tours through the campus, allowing them to get used to the layout and academic requirements of HWS before the beginning of the school year. Students from the Third World Coalition took an active role in these programs; helping students to adjust while promoting the organization and the Center as a place to convene and find support.

1. Interview with Terry Smith, October 27, 2023

The Center itself continued to be both a residence and the headquarters for students involved in the Third World Coalition, which would host new events like Black History Week, Kwanzaa, and also bring speakers like Ossie Davis, Julian Bond and Dick Gregory² to the campus. Some of those speakers would occasionally stop by the Center itself to talk.³ The vibrancy of student leadership and the Colleges' commitment to supporting it seemed to be the draw that brought so many prominent national figures to Geneva.

In 1976, the Latin Affairs Organization was formed with the support of counselor James Henderson, sharing both the Center and the membership of the Third World Coalition while becoming a separate student organization. The Third World Coalition engaged with Student Government and the Administration, securing funds to co-sponsor programs and events whenever possible. Although funding was limited, student leaders were committed to making themselves heard and seen; however, concerns remained that most of the campus community seemed to be uninterested or unaware of the Center and the student leaders' efforts.

By 1977, the Center had fallen into some disrepair, and students petitioned the Colleges to renovate it. Broken balusters and windows with scarred glass were replaced and proper signage was installed alongside a television set.⁴ These renovations to the Center demonstrated that the Colleges were cognizant of the needs of the students living there, though the house itself was still not ideal.

As part of a Presidential Special Committee to review "Minority Programs," a report was conducted in 1978 by James Littrell, the Chaplain of the Colleges, which found that although students of color were acknowledged by the Administration, little was done in terms of policy to intentionally guide or support them. The report also identified the purchasing of the Center and its renovations as one of the more significant steps taken by the Administration.⁵

The Presidential Special Committee determined that placing academic support programs under the purview of the Office of Minority Affairs had an effect of perpetuating negative stereotypes and creating the assumption that these programs were unavailable to a wider range of students on campus. To address these concerns, counselor James Henderson was moved to a newly created office for Academic Support Services in Smith Hall. To further address deficits in official policy, the Minority Affairs President's Standing Committee was created to improve the Colleges' relationship with students of color going forward, with which student leaders from the Third World Coalition actively engaged.⁶

Michael Stevens took over the role of Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs after Edward Blackwell's departure from the Colleges, continuing to be involved with the Presidential Standing Committee and the Center.⁷

2. Over the years, many other famous national figures would come to the Colleges, many of whom were similarly relevant and radical. The impression many of these speakers had of the Colleges tended to be very positive.

3. Interview with Terry Smith, October 27, 2023

4. Interview with Terry Smith, October 27, 2023

5. Minority Affairs President's Standing Committee 1978-1979, HWS Archives & Special Collections

6. The size of the committee changed over time, at one point being made up of thirty-three members, and eventually being reduced to fifteen. The composition of the committee itself always included two members of both Student Governments, at least two students of color, and multiple members of the Faculty and Administration.

7. Edward Blackwell was offered a position at the University of Notre Dame, to develop their Minority Affairs department.



Students in front of Third World Cultural Center.
412 Pulteney Street.

During a 1979 profile in *The Herald*, the newly elected president of the Third World Coalition, Randy Brock '80, shared his aspirations to improve the social life of students of color on campus, which he considered lacking. In particular, he expressed concern over further renovations to the Center, which required action on the part of the Administration. According to him, "I feel they are not too concerned with TWC. They know it looks good, but the active participation and concern doesn't seem to be there."⁸ Though the Center remained an informal space during this time, his desire for improvement would be shared by the Colleges and acted upon over the next few years.

During the time of transition from the 1970s to the 1980s, the campus would see a few changes in the names of student organizations and the Center. An International Students Club was formed

to support the increasing population of international students on campus.⁹ The Minority Culture Center was renamed the "Third World Cultural Center," establishing a visible link to the student led Third World Coalition whose members were its inhabitants and caretakers. The Latin Affairs Organization would also rename itself to the Latin American Organization. Student activism at this time was focused primarily on the issue of divestment from the South African Apartheid regime, a movement in which the Third World Coalition student leadership fully participated.

In 1981, after coming to understand the inadequacy of the old house on 412 Pulteney St., the Colleges purchased and renovated a house on 288 Pulteney St., which became the new Third World Cultural Center. That same year, Harry B. Matthews became the new Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs. The Center's new location would strengthen the connection between students of color and the Office of Minority Affairs, being used often by the Office to hold meetings, host lectures and presentations, as well as to conduct leadership workshops for students, which Assistant Dean Matthews was known for.

The Third World Cultural Center was still residential and primarily student run, with four student curators chosen to schedule and plan events organized in the Center. These curators would have to follow the regulations set up by the Office of Minority Affairs, managing the usage of the Center and its upkeep. It is important to point out that the Center did not lose its original purpose as a space where all students could gather to study and socialize, and one where the Third World

8. "I want to get more minority students involved and give them something to participate in so their life on campus is better. Social life for minority students lacks a great deal ... you either fit into the activities of the predominantly white campus, or you become an individual..." *The Herald* 16 February 1979

9. *The Herald* 9 May 1980



Students in front of Minority Cultural Center. 412 Pulteney Street.

Coalition and Latin American Organization held regular meetings and social gatherings.

In 1983, while still emphasizing their willingness to cooperate and support other cultural clubs and organizations, and citing the success of the Latin American Organization and International Students Club, the Third World Coalition changed its name to the Black Student Coalition, so as to focus specifically on the Black student body at HWS.¹⁰ All three organizations were highly inclusive, consistently stressing that they were open for all students to join.

At this point, some students would also begin to express dissatisfaction with the Third World Cultural Center's name, a label that signaled the otherness of the space on campus.¹¹ The Center started to see more organized civic engagement, with members of the Black Student Coalition organizing for various campaigns and handing out voter registration forms in the Center at 288 Pulteney St., as well as the Office of Minority Affairs in Coxe Hall.

Overall, the period of 1974-1985 saw improvements in the efforts made by the Colleges in policies regarding the recruitment, support, and recognition of students of color, exemplified in the Colleges' renovations of the old Center, and their proactive decision to move the Center to a more visible location. Through these years, student leaders ensured that the momentum of progress continued by taking advantage of every opportunity to get involved and address the campus' stereotypical perception of students of color and their initiatives, leading efforts to continue dialogues with members of the Faculty and Administration at the Center.

Although these positive changes were welcomed, concerns around the Colleges' commitment to students of color remained. Unfortunately, underlying and structural issues relating to the campus environment for those students would begin to emerge in the following years.

10. Black Student Coalition Binder 1983-1989, HWS Archives & Special Collections

11. *The Herald* 19 December 1985

I I I

T H E S T R U G G L E F O R
B E L O N G I N G

M I D 1 9 8 0 s T O L A T E 1 9 9 0 s

“Although many hardships and obstacles served to dishearten our progress and confidence, we as a collective and more important, as a people, have overcome them. We therefore would like to thank those who have stood by and helped us through it all. A special thanks goes to Mr. Charles Render, African-American Student Coalition, Latin American Organization, and Pan African Latin Organization.”

From the first issue of *United* magazine.

During these years, although the Colleges made attempts to further diversify the Faculty and Administration, the turnover at the Office of Minority Affairs was considered a significant issue and, in 1986, the Office would once again undergo a change in leadership, with Charles V. Render taking over the role of Assistant Dean from Harry Matthews.¹

By 1987, issues of racial prejudice and polarization once again came to the forefront of the conversations on campus, sparked by multiple incidents throughout the country.²

Student organizations became more vocal and organized in their advocacy, for issues such as the decreasing enrollment of students of color, to the anti-Apartheid movement.³

In 1988, frustrations would specifically emerge with the announcement that only a handful of Black students had enrolled as first-years at Hobart College that year.⁴

An ad-hoc committee of Hobart and William Smith students released a declaration that year to protest what they saw as growing

1. Hobart and William Smith Colleges Official Publication 1986-1987

2. *The Herald* cites the Howard Beach hate crime, and multiple other incidents in New York and across colleges and universities. - *The Herald* January 15, 1987

3. As an example, the Black Student Coalition orchestrated a successful and convincing protest to ensure the Colleges fully divested from South Africa. - *The Herald* 5 November 1987

4. Between five and eight. - *The Herald* 21 October 1988; *The Herald* 3 March 1989

problems on campus, with a section dedicated specifically to race and gender.⁵ They believed that the Colleges were not committed enough to improving on these issues and presented solutions that included the expansion of recruitment of students of color and the redoubling of efforts to diversify the Faculty, among others.

In a *Herald* interview, Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs Charles Render spoke candidly about these issues and his attempts to improve them. He fundamentally agreed with students on the Colleges' unaddressed issues of diversity and inclusion, and though he felt that there was an effort for improvement by many within the institution, more still needed to be done, he stressed the importance of a supportive environment for students through increased programming and plans for a full renovation of the Third World Cultural Center.⁶

Unfortunately, on January 13, 1989, Render submitted a letter of resignation, citing "a complete lack of support" as the primary reason behind his exit. When asked by *The Herald* about his departure and the state of the Office of Minority Affairs, Render expressed his frustration at the lack of progress: "[He said] that there was never movement, never any administrative support. There was always verbal support but little physical support." Not only did he feel isolated in his role, but also, the Office of Minority Affairs, in his view, was still not a part of the campus' mainstream, and the Colleges were not creating an adequate environment in which students of color felt they belonged. Despite this, he still

expressed hope in the future of the Colleges: "The potential is there, but it won't get any better until the institution makes a firm commitment. It's a trickle-down effect; when the commitment begins up top it will float down throughout the community. But not until someone takes the step will any improvement be made."⁷

Throughout the rest of 1989, students remained steadfast in their activism, with the Black Student Coalition undergoing a name change to the African American Student Coalition. An unprecedented level of cooperation would occur between various student groups to hold events such as the "Day of Minority Solidarity" which focused on intercultural dialogues and celebrating diversity.⁸ A new student group, the Pan-African Latin Organization, was also formed, with the goal of fostering further collaboration in student leadership and awareness among the whole student body, and specifically to unify the African American Student Coalition and Latin American Organization's efforts.



One of the most significant initiatives that started in 1989 was the first issue of *United* magazine, a literary magazine published by the Third World Cultural Center that

was dedicated to showcasing the perspectives of students of color at Hobart and William Smith, including poetry as well as reflections

5. "PROBLEM: To be considered a college that values a liberal education, a college must be fundamentally progressive. Hobart and William Smith Colleges are not placing sufficient emphasis on gender or minority issues. Therefore, we cannot be seriously considered liberal institutions of higher learning." – Declaration of Independent Education, *The Herald* 10 October 1988

6. *The Herald* 21 October 1988

7. *The Herald* 3 March 1989

8. *The Herald* 31 May 1989



Edward Blackwell, Associate Dean of Minority Affairs with students.

regarding recent events on and off campus.⁹ In the preface to that first issue, the magazine specially thanked former Assistant Dean Render for aiding in its creation.

For the rest of 1989, students continued to criticize the Administration for what they saw as a lack of action regarding renovations to the Center and the hiring of a new Dean of Minority Affairs.¹⁰ The criticism would begin to fade when, towards the end of the year, and 11 years after his departure, the Colleges welcomed back Edward Blackwell as the new Associate Dean of Minority Affairs. Dean Blackwell was excited to return, believing that the Colleges were ready to improve, with the main challenge being “[B]uilding stability, consistency, and creating a better understanding in our environment.”¹¹

Within a month, Dean Blackwell circulated a memorandum announcing that the Office of Minority Affairs would undergo a name change to the Office of Intercultural Affairs, alongside the new stated goal of the office: “The charge of challenge of this office is to create an environment of interactive pluralism, where students, faculty and staff have the ability to meet and engage one another across ethnic and racial identities.”¹²

As the Colleges continued to improve in their efforts to address issues of diversity and inclusion, and the Office of Intercultural Affairs on 101 St. Clair St. came under Dean Blackwell’s leadership, a renewed focus on the Third World Cultural Center as a cultural, social, and academic space emerged. Fostering a diverse and supportive

9. These magazines are still available in HWS’s Archives and Special Collections.

10. “As an African-American male at these colleges, I am appalled at the extremely slow progress of the administration to concretely address the issues of hiring a new Dean of ‘minority’ affairs, and the renovations of the Third World Cultural Center.”
- *The Herald* 5 May 1989

11. *The Herald* 15 September 1989

12. *The Herald* 27 October 1989



Third World Cultural Center. 288 Pulteney Street, Geneva, New York.

environment, the Center saw increased use by other groups on campus to hold meetings, seminars and programs, and was widely viewed as an important place to find resources and support.¹³

In the early '90s, members of the Pan African Latin Organization, Latin American Organization and African American Student Coalition continued their activism, organizing Black History Month programs and sponsoring visits by prominent figures.¹⁴ They also continued to raise awareness and pushed to increase diversity on campus, with the assistance of staff at the Office of Intercultural Affairs. Together, they arranged the expansion of the Student Solidarity Day, formerly known as the Minority Solidarity Day, and a Diversity Awareness Week. They

also encouraged visits to the Third World Cultural Center, which by this point had become a nonresidential space.

In 1994, the Office of Intercultural Affairs moved to Smith Hall to foster closer collaboration with the Deans of the Colleges, and with other offices at the Colleges in general. A year later, the various Asian student clubs on campus merged into a single, inclusive organization known as the Asian Support and Interests Association, with the goal of raising awareness of Asian culture and socio-political issues, and meeting regularly in the Third World Cultural Center.¹⁵

In 1997, with the support of students connected to the Center, and Associate Dean Edward Blackwell, the Third World Cultural

13. "The Third World Cultural Center represents an affirmation of the Colleges' commitment to pluralism. It serves as a reminder that all cultures must have a stronghold from which to encourage and engender cultural understanding. The center acts as a focal point for resources and social and academic activity." - *The Herald* 3 November 1989

14. Actor Giancarlo Esposito and rapper Lawrence "Kris" Parker, better known as KRS-One, among others, spoke at events sponsored by the Pan African Latin Organization, Latin American Organization and African American Student Coalition.

15. *The Herald* 6 October 1995

Center was renamed the Intercultural Center. In October of 1998, Vivian Relta became the Associate Dean of Intercultural Affairs. Under her leadership, plans to move the Office of Intercultural Affairs to the Intercultural Center were started. Over this time, a computer center and media room were added to the Intercultural Center, while students continued to have an active role in its programming.

Shortly after President Mark D. Gearan's inauguration in October 1999, the Intercultural Center went through a major structural change with the Office of Intercultural Affairs and HEOP moving into the building. The Intercultural Center's new integration with an administrative office did not alter its purpose primarily as a place for students, with student clubs continuing to hold meetings and programs there often. With the relocation, the Office of Intercultural Affairs, which always held oversight of the Intercultural Center, was better able to connect to students, sponsoring and supporting a significant number of the events student organizations were holding, including an April fashion show, various lectures and forums, and cultural awareness and history month celebrations.¹⁶

Aside from these programs and events, 1999 was also an active year for student organizations, with the African American Student Coalition changing its name to Sankofa: The Black Student Union of Hobart and William Smith, and the formation of the Caribbean Student Association. That year, the Latin American Organization also

held its first Cultural Extravaganza, and in addition, for 1999's Multicultural Weekend, students reached out to dozens of Hobart and William Smith's alumni of color to form a panel. More than 40 alumni of color returned for that event, which began with a keynote address by D-L Kenney '70, now a trustee of the Colleges. From this event the Afro Latino Alumni/Alumnae Association was formed, a network of alumni of color which worked closely and gathered at the Intercultural Center going forward.

The path to this point may have been fraught, without much stability, visibility, or dedicated institutional support, but through consistent advocacy and perseverance, the framework was put in place for the Office of Intercultural Affairs in the Intercultural Center to eventually become a truly central space on campus, with a renewed focus on student leadership, cross-campus collaborations, signature programs, and alumni outreach. As the 2000s approached, unfortunately, some of that abiding instability would reoccur in the Office of Intercultural Affairs' leadership.

16. Intercultural Center Website, Archived January 13, 2002



Alejandra Molina and Bilal Akeem in front of the Adams Intercultural Center.

I V

CENTRALIZING VISIBILITY,
RESISTING MARGINALIZATION

EARLY 2000s TO 2024

“[O]nce we came to this side, we also noticed that even though we were here, we still weren’t visible. [I]n the sense this is the first house basically, that you see once you enter Hobart and William Smith Colleges.”

Edith Wormley, Associate Director of HEOP/Academic Opportunity Programs¹

During the early 2000s, the Intercultural Center was still not particularly visible to the rest of the campus, although the students who frequented it found a welcoming and inclusive space. For a building that held so much administrative significance, the Intercultural Center was a uniquely open and accessible environment that offered space, resources, and support for the academic and day-to-day activities of students of color. Many students of color attempted to raise awareness of the Center’s existence to the wider campus community and tried to push back against common misconceptions about the space, such as assuming that it was an office building, and not a student center.

The change in location to the Intercultural Center (IC) also brought changes in leadership within the Office of Intercultural Affairs. In January of 2000, Associate Dean of Intercultural Affairs Vivian Relta left for Cornell University, with Director of Opportunity Programs Edward Blackwell exiting as well soon afterwards. In September of 2000, the Colleges hired a new Director, Pamela S. Thomas, although she was appointed to the separate positions of Director of Opportunity Programs and Director of Intercultural Affairs, her official title was Assistant Dean of Students. Thomas’ leadership brought new collaborations with other offices within the Colleges, an increased support for student organizations and their activities by both offices, and a renewed focus on HEOP students and career opportunity programs.

1. Interview with Edith Wormley February 5, 2024

After Director Thomas's departure in 2003, Donna Albro, Director of the Colleges' Peer Education in Human Relations program, became Assistant Dean of Intercultural Affairs and continued to make use of the Intercultural Center to support student events that included Kwanzaa, Ramadan, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Women's History Month.²

Positions, titles, and responsibilities often go through changes, and the Office of Intercultural Affairs was no exception. The Assistant Dean/Director of Intercultural Affairs' responsibilities had shifted over the years from those of a Dean for students of color to a role more focused on supporting students and their leadership, expanding campus-wide programs and collaborations, and further engaging with the Geneva community.

In 2006, a search for a new Director of Intercultural Affairs was conducted, and, unfortunately, the selected candidate declined the job offer. As a result, Faculty member in the Spanish and Hispanic Studies Department, Alejandra Molina was appointed by President Mark D. Gearan to serve as the Director of Intercultural Affairs later that year. The association between the Intercultural Center and international students would also be strengthened during this time, as the Center was home to both the meetings and programs held by the International Students Association as well as the office of the then International Student Adviser, Chevanne DeVaney '95, P'21, P'23, who currently serves as Director of Alumni and Alumnae Relations.

Director Molina's mandate was to make the Intercultural Center a truly central and visible space on campus, specifically by generating programming from the Center itself. The Center also continued to provide space, resources and support to the student organizations that had always been a constant in holding their meetings there. Alongside these efforts was an added focus on strengthening the longstanding connections between the Office of Intercultural Affairs and campus and Geneva community partners.

Throughout the rest of the late 2000s, the Intercultural Center's signature programming took shape, with weekly and monthly events promoting academic support, student leadership, and collaborations with faculty, staff and community leaders. In these years, there was an increase in the number of student organizations who connected with the space and were supported by the Center's staff, including those that did not necessarily meet there regularly, or that had not historically been associated with the Center. Students regarded the Center as a "home away from home" and, as always, enjoyed the Center as a diverse space to socialize, study, and strengthen their leadership skills.

As these programs and events were held at the Center, it became a necessity to publicize them, leading to the dissemination of weekly event calendars, as well as an annual newsletter that promoted the programs, events and meeting times of the many student clubs that were involved with the IC. It also incorporated reflections from students, alumni, staff, faculty, and Geneva community members.³ These consistent

2. Eliminating Racial Disparities in College Completion and Achievement: Current Initiatives, New Ideas, and Assessment - A Teagle Foundation Working Group White Paper September 2006

3. Throughout its publication, the newsletter has included sections such as: Our Faculty's Perspective, Our Campus Community, Leadership @ HWS, Alum Connections, Geneva: Our Community, and Student Spotlights

efforts to increase the Center's visibility continued to expand and, beginning in the 2010s, the Intercultural Center began to aid in sponsoring and organizing more public events, including film screenings and conferences that focused on the intersection of culture, community, social justice, and academics.⁴ To further publicize the Center and its events, an official blog would be created in 2011.⁵

Throughout the rest of the 2010s, the Intercultural Center and its staff also served as important supporters of student activism, creating an environment for students to gather and identify problems and their solutions. When major incidents of prejudice or objectionable behavior occurred, the Center and its Director were instrumental in facilitating discussions, responses, and mediating dialogue with the Administration. The accessibility of the Center also ensured students in need had a place to refuel and decompress as they confronted day-to-day instances of bias and insensitivity.⁶

The Intercultural Center as a physical space remained relatively unchanged throughout this time, though major improvements were still needed. In 2017, after an external review of the Colleges' Intercultural Affairs Office, a student focus group held an open discussion with Buildings and Grounds on the renovations that they deemed necessary. A survey on the same topic was also sent to Hobart and William Smith alumni with affiliations to the IC, regarding the aspects of the Center they considered integral and what they believed needed improvement. Preliminary concepts were made in 2018,



Meeting with the Board of Trustees in 2021 to discuss the renovation.

but the process would slow until 2020, when architects from the SWBR design firm would visit the Center to talk about the use of the Intercultural Center, before proposing an initial design. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Intercultural Center operated in a very limited capacity, maintaining the programs it held and supported virtually until the Center's reopening in 2021, when club meetings could be held in person again. That same year, a productive meeting with the Board of Trustees on the renovation would occur, and architects returned to the Intercultural Center to measure and review the space and the proposed renovation areas.

4. Examples of conferences included: Lacrosse: The Creator's Game, Engaging Differences: A Colloquium on Diversity and Civic Responsibility, Addressing Food (In)Stability and (In)Justice in our Communities, the Finger Lakes Latino Film Festival, and Immigration: Voices and Identities

5. HWS Adams Intercultural Center Home Away From Home Blog -<https://hwsinterculturalaffairscenter.wordpress.com>

6. The Intercultural Center was open from 8:30 a.m. until midnight on weekdays and remained open on weekends from 2 p.m. to midnight. The Center's open-door policy and fluid schedule made it a space that students could always rely on.



The official ribbon cutting at the Adams Intercultural Center on April 22, 2023.



The renovation would kick off in March 2022 when with full support from former President Joyce P. Jacobsen, fundraising for the renovated center would begin, and after a leadership gift from Board of Trustees Chair Craig R. Stine '81, P'17 and Kathy Hay Stine, the Center was renamed during Hobart's Bicentennial in honor of Alger Adams '32, Hobart and William Smith's first Black graduate, firmly linking the legacy of such a prominent alumnus to the Center's history, as well as to future student generations.⁷

As Chevanne DeVaney '95, P'21, P'23, Director of Alumni and Alumnae Relations so elegantly states:

"I think what AIC has the potential to be from here on out is limitless. The students need to embrace that. The faculty and staff need to embrace that. It's been named after Alger Adams, [it] has such significance as the first building to be named after a man of color. I really hope students, not just our Black and brown students and our international students, but all students see his journey, and the way he did that with grace."⁸



7. In September 1928, a bright, promising young man from Omaha, Nebraska arrived in Geneva, only to discover that Hobart College, which had granted him a scholarship, would not house him because he was Black. Despite the many challenges and de facto segregation that faced him, with the support of Geneva's African American community, he persevered and ended up excelling academically, graduating in 1932 with a triple-major in Greek, English and psychology. He went on to find success in his professional career and was involved in a multitude of civil rights efforts.

8. Interview with Chevanne DeVaney March 12, 2024



The newly renovated Adams Intercultural Center at 288 Pulteney Street.

The renovation project ended in early 2023, and on April 23, the Adams Intercultural Center was inaugurated with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by President Mark D. Gearan and former President Gregory J. Vincent '83. The improved and expanded space remains committed to community, inclusivity, and support of student advocacy.

This current chapter of the Adams Intercultural Center's 54-year history has both parallels and distinctions from previous chapters.

Throughout the Adams Intercultural Center's history, the leadership and involvement of students has not changed, nor has the Center's commitment to supporting and providing students a space to gather, study, socialize, and address challenges. Unlike in past chapters, the Center has become more centrally visible, less marginalized, and firmly connected to the pulse of the campus.

Throughout the Adams Intercultural Center's history, commitment and student activism were important in fostering the growth of the Center and the support of the communities who use it. This commitment began with the purchase of a small house on 412 Pulteney St., the signing of an oath, and the dedication of students to making a place for themselves, along with the commitment of past Presidents, Deans, Directors, Administrators, dedicated Faculty, and generations of student activists who persevered, and whose unwavering leadership made the Center a "home away from home" for all those who will be writing its next chapters.

A F T E R W O R D



I would like to start by thanking Bilal for a shared journey which culminated in the publication of the history of the Adams Intercultural Center. I will forever cherish the memories of our meetings, our editing sessions and our piecing together of a history that needed to be told.

As I prepare to step down as director of the Center, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for all who have accompanied me during my 18-year tenure: from the dedicated colleagues who lent me their support and expertise, to the countless students whose passionate commitment to the Center I tried to live up to from day-to-day. As you turned the pages of this booklet, I hope you sensed not just a history, but a legacy — one that speaks to the tireless advocacy of colleagues and the unwavering activism of students who together built a ‘home away from home’ on our campus.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the pivotal role played by President Mark D. Gearan, who believed I could lend a hand in fortifying the foundation of the IC house so many had been building before me — now transformed into the Adams Intercultural Center, which will welcome and support members of the campus and Geneva communities for many years to come.

Alejandra Molina



SHANEIA '16 Mayra '17 Josh M '18 Polly ♥ Danielle '15 DAYANA

LA * DJENEBA '20 * SIMA '15 GEN '15

CHAYON '15 BRADLEY '18 RICHIE LILLY '15 Amber

A '14 NATE '17 Josiah '19 SHWETA NANYA OBEYE RO

SHAN '16 Jackeline '19 孙婷婷 GARTH

STACEY '19 LIFE IS GOOD

SHAMAR CHRIS SQUAD KEEP PUSHING DIM

JESS '20 KEELY '13 SHANNON DR '17

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Neill '15 Eliss M '14 Prince ♥ Sima '15 Kiana '13 SP

S. PEREZ '15 DANE Star ♥ VERONICA '08 RIDORE

- Jolyon Victoria '14 My love the IC - Barry '10 King

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DANIELLE KATIE

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IN SHOO '18 KENDER '22 LANA

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LTURS COMING SPRING 2019 PHYLICIA



A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I am deeply grateful to Alejandra Molina, Director of the Adams Intercultural Center, Brandon Moblo, Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, Natalia St. Lawrence '16, Assistant Director of Marketing and Social Media, Office of Communications, Terry Smith '80, Edith Wormley, Associate Director, Office of Academic Opportunities, Chevanne DeVaney '95, P'21, P'23, Director of Alumni and Alumnae Relations, John Cromartie '80, Geneva residents Lillian Collins and Beth Henderson, as well as the Colleges' Archives and Special Collections and The Herald for their invaluable contributions to this project. Lastly, I would like to thank my dearest mother, father and sister, for all of their support and love.

HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES