

AACC Internal Review  
December 2001 – March 2002

**Final Report**

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## **Executive Summary**

North Carolina State University's African American Cultural Center (AACC) began operations in January 1991. Since that time, there has not been an internal review of its overall functioning and effectiveness. An external review of the AACC was completed in November 2000.

In December 2001, the Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs appointed an eight-member panel that was charged with conducting a comprehensive assessment of the AACC and formulating recommendations for strengthening its status as a core campus unit. The Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity Programs was assigned to facilitate the internal review process. Because of concern for broad-based stakeholder involvement in the assessment process, this internal review was designed to obtain input from diverse constituents, both on and off campus.

From December 2001 through March 2002, the AACC Internal Review Panel spent approximately 675 person hours interviewing AACC staff, campus constituents, community representatives and University administrators. Considerable time was also spent reviewing documents and files, deliberating over findings, articulating concerns and formulating recommendations.

Review activities revealed that the AACC possesses a number of strengths and has achieved noteworthy successes despite challenges posed by a history of under-funding, inadequate resources and weak institutional support. The review panel has determined that many areas of the AACC's operations must be strengthened if it is to fulfill its potential as a campus unit that enhances the academic, cultural and social development of its constituents.

This report offers recommendations for the future development of the AACC in the areas of Foundations, Programming, Leadership, Organization and Management, Human Resources, Resident Organizations, Financial Resources, Facility Management and Usage, Library, Gallery, Campus and Community Relations, Technology and Equipment, Legal Responsibilities and Ethics, Equal Opportunity and Access, Diversity and Assessment/Evaluation. The recommendations call for focused attention to issues of governance, long range planning, internal accountability systems, strategic partnerships and resource development.

It is imperative that the AACC retain its identity as an African American Cultural Center. A fully functioning African American Cultural Center is indispensable to NCSU's current mission with its stated goals of "building a diverse and inclusive campus community, fostering demographic and intellectual diversity, fostering internal and external partnerships and adopting an operational model that embraces efficiency and accountability". To these ends, the University administration must take the recommendations presented in this report seriously and must commit the financial and institutional resources needed to ensure their full implementation.

## **Historical Perspective**

The AACC was established for the purpose of supporting the academic, cultural and social needs of NCSU's African American community while providing a vehicle for increased cross-cultural understanding for the entire university. The AACC was intended to be "a hub of research and scholarly work" that would "promote an awareness of and appreciation for the diversity and richness of the African American experience". It was also expected that the AACC would contribute to the intellectual development and cultural enrichment of the broader community.

In January 1991, the AACC began operations in the A. M. Witherspoon Student Center Annex, a new campus building that was financed by student fees and managed by Student Affairs. The AACC shared the Witherspoon Building with three Student Affairs units: Student Government, the Student Media Authority and the Student Center Cinema. The AACC's mission, operational structure, programs, staffing, and activities were developed and administered through the Office of the Associate Vice Provost and Facilitator of African American Affairs.

From its inception, the AACC filled long-standing needs for a venue to present cultural and scholarly activities that focused on the African American experience, a place where African American students could hold social events and a facility that provided office space for African American student organizations. It was expected that the fulfillment of these needs would benefit African American students by providing intellectually and culturally empowering programming, an accepting and nurturing environment as well as opportunities to develop their leadership skills. It was also anticipated that the broader university community would benefit from opportunities provided through AACC programs and activities to gain increased knowledge of and greater appreciation for the contributions of African Americans.

The AACC's mission, philosophical basis, operational structure and programmatic thrusts were presented in foundational documents entitled "Organizational Structure of the Council of Directors of the African American Cultural Center" and "African American Cultural Center Programs". These documents served as blueprints for the development of AACC operations.

Throughout the entire lifespan this unit, the advocates and supporters of the AACC have perceived that it has been challenged by various segments of the NCSU community to "prove" its legitimacy. Rather than regarding the AACC as a unit that could advance the University's mission for diversity, inclusion and cross-cultural understanding, the AACC was seen by some as promoting segregation. Variable institutional support and chronic under-funding has contributed to the appearance that the AACC was not truly valued by the University.

Despite fiscal challenges and a host of other obstacles (both internal and external), the AACC has grown in importance to NCSU's African American community and its other constituents. To supporters and advocates, the AACC is more than just a campus unit that promotes African American culture and provides vital programming. It symbolizes the advancement of African Americans at NCSU and reflects the University's commitment to promoting cross cultural understanding, acceptance and appreciation.

## **Review Process**

An eight-member panel, together with a facilitator, was appointed by the Vice Provost of Diversity and African American Affairs to conduct this review of the African American Cultural Center (AACC):

- Mr. Robert Atkinson, President, Afrikan American Student Advisory Council
- Dr. Thomas Conway, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
- Dr. Frances Graham, Assistant Vice Provost for Gender Affairs / Director of the Women's Center
- Dr. Clifford Griffin, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Administration
- Mr. Tony Knox, Chair, African American community Advisory Council
- Dr. Monica Leach, Assistant Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Ms. Kimberly McNair, President, Society of Afrikan American Culture
- Ms. Harriett Southerland, President, Black Alumni Society
- Dr. Theresa Edwards, Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity Programs, Review Facilitator

The first meeting of the AACC Internal Review Panel ("the Panel") was called in December 2001. The Panel met several times per week for 14 weeks (through March 2002), reviewed over 800 pages of documents and spent approximately 675 person hours interviewing 60 people (individually and in groups). The Panel also spent nearly 540 person hours in full panel and sub-committee meetings discussing review findings, identifying areas of concern, articulating conclusions and developing recommendations. A survey to gauge student, faculty and staff opinions about the AACC was created and disseminated. Over 100 completed surveys were returned. Each Panel member also submitted written comments (conclusions, concerns and recommendations) that have been incorporated into the present report.

The Panel regarded this review as a critical process that would have far-reaching ramifications for the total NCSU community with particular significance for African Americans both on and off campus. The group also remained mindful of the critical role that the AACC must play if the University is to attain its stated goals of "building a diverse and inclusive campus community, fostering demographic and intellectual diversity, fostering internal and external partnerships and adopting an operational model that embraces efficiency and accountability",

Throughout the course of this review, the Panel was mindful of the contributions of the AACC's visionaries and founders as well as the support of its advocates. At the same time, the Panel was cognizant of the AACC's on-going struggle for legitimacy and acceptance as relevant to the University's mission. Objectivity and compassion were applied to the process of identifying operational limitations and pockets of organizational and programmatic dysfunction while holding genuine appreciation for the AACC's strengths and successes. Extreme care was taken to see all issues of concern clearly so as not to hold individuals accountable for circumstances over which they have no control. During the course of this review, the Panel developed keen insights into the workings of the AACC as well as into its staff, programs, services and constituents. The panel is confident that it has completed a fair and comprehensive review of the AACC.

## Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### A. Foundations: Vision, Mission, Goals

Introduction: The AACC's "Foundations" are the building blocks that were laid at the base of its operational structure: the vision, mission and goals. A vision statement expresses the "ideal" that an organization strives to create over time. A mission statement describes what must be done to transform the ideal into reality. The goals identify the steps that the organization must take to fulfill its mission.

The mission for an effective African American Cultural Center should address the academic, cultural and social needs of students as well as the importance of assisting in the development of a deeper understanding of African American culture. The vision, mission and goals should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated when necessary. (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: A review of past organizational documents did not reveal a clear statement of the AACC's vision. A document that was prepared for the internal review panel in February 2002 listed the following as elements of the AACC's current vision:

- Attractive, inviting space
- Safe haven for Black students
- Programming about the Black experience for the benefit of the entire campus community
- Africentric library and art gallery
- Community outreach
- Global emphasis

An early version of AACC's mission statement says that it was designed ***to provide a supportive, nurturing environment for African American students and to provide learning experiences for the benefit of the entire campus community, as well as for the greater community, regarding the history and culture of people of African descent as an aid in promoting an understanding of, and appreciation for, African Americans as one component of our diverse society.*** This early mission statement addresses the social and cultural purposes of the AACC's existence.

A more recent version of the AACC's mission statement reads: ***The African American Cultural Center, through its programs and activities, seeks to provide educational experiences that promote an awareness of and appreciation for the diversity and richness of the African American experience. With a goal of engaging all academic areas of the University, the AACC develops and implements a variety of programs including lectures, workshops, seminars, student study groups, festivals, theater, dance, music and other cultural events. While enhancing the academic excellence and cultural awareness of African American students, the AACC provides opportunities for all members of the campus community to receive a more culturally diverse and enriching***

**educational experience.** This mission statement emphasizes the AACC's purpose as an educational unit. It is contained in internal documents and posted on the AACC's website at <http://aacc.bas.ncsu.edu/> but is not plainly visible anywhere else in the AACC.

The following goals, which guided the AACC's initial program development, were presented in the foundational documents:

- To sponsor a series of academic, cultural and professional activities that will bring more African-American scholars and artists to campus.
- To develop and provide an array of leadership and personal development programs.
- To promote the intra-university development of the African-American Heritage Society in providing intellectual development in the African/African-American experience from both a historical and cultural perspective.
- To promote the cultural diversification of the university community through an Africentric library and an art gallery which would showcase the work of past and present African and African-American artists.
- To provide space for appropriate student social and organizational activities.
- Provide guidance and support to African American students in the development of programs that feature African-American history, culture, and heritage for presentation in the AACC.

Each of these goals had recommended activities attached to them. The "Organizational Structure" document presented a sound philosophical basis for these goals and the associated activities, advancing the expectation that these activities will help students become more confident and successful. However, this review did not reveal clearly defined outcome measures for student academic, cultural and social development. The panel did not find evidence of systematic, comprehensive and periodic efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies designed to enable the AACC to meet its goals and fulfill its mission.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The vision, mission and goals of the AACC serve as its operational foundation and, as such, must be clearly articulated, broadly publicized, periodically reviewed and revised as needed. The absence of clear foundational statements makes it very difficult for an organization to assess its effectiveness because it is unable to "see" where it's going. The following recommendations are offered regarding the AACC's vision, mission and goals:

1. The AACC needs a clear vision statement that describes the impact of the "ideal" African American Cultural Center on all segments of the University community and on the broader community outside of the University.
2. The AACC should be guided by a mission statement that reflects the "best practice" standards for what a Black or African American Cultural Center should be and how it should function to educate and support African Americans while providing vehicles to

expose the entire campus community to examinations of race, culture and diversity, particularly as they relate to the African American experience in history and contemporary society.

3. The AACC's mission statement must assure that proper attention is given to fully developing the unit's academic aspects while continuing to promote cultural and social development.
4. The AACC's mission statement should be publicly and prominently displayed in all of the spaces occupied by the AACC, at all AACC functions and in all AACC printed materials.
5. The AACC's goals must be reviewed, updated and presented along with identified benchmarks and measurable outcomes for student performance, cross-cultural involvement and campus-wide participation. Goals for the broader community should address "human capacity building" through programs and initiatives that promote understanding of the African American experience.
6. Copies of the original documents that present the "foundations" of the AACC (philosophical basis, rationale, developmental history, organizational structure, initial program descriptions, etc.) should be appropriately archived and made available for public review.
7. Documents that present the operation of the AACC (organizational structure, current program descriptions, new initiatives, etc.) should be reviewed, updated and made available for the public.

## **B. Organization, Governance and Management**

Introduction: The AACC must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve its stated goals. There should be an accurate organizational chart. Lines of authority and systems of accountability should be clear and consistently enforced. There should be written administrative policies and procedures for managing operational processes such as strategic planning, program development, assessment, personnel selection, task delegation and decision-making (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The AACC was created as an academic unit that would report to the Provost through the Coordinator for African American Affairs. It was expected that the AACC would "become a hub of research and scholarly work for all segments of the university and an outreach to the community as well". This is presented in a document entitled "Organizational Structure for the Council of Directors of the African American Cultural Center".

The Council of Directors (COD) was established as the AACC's policy-making body, appointed by the Provost and consisting of 7 students, 7 faculty, 7 professional staff and 5 ex officio members. The proposed functioning of this governing body was detailed in the "Organizational Structure" document. The COD was originally charged with

1. Recommending policy for the general operation of the AACC

2. Adopting an operational structure that used committees to address programming decisions, gallery operations, library operations and facility issues:
  - a. Program Committee - program recommendations, new program approval and program evaluation
  - b. Gallery Committee - establish policy and offer advice for selecting works to display; assist in obtaining gallery resources
  - c. Library Committee – facilitate materials acquisitions
  - d. Facility Committee: develop policy for the space usage, monitor the condition of the facility and make recommendations about facility needs, additions, repairs and improvements
3. Maintaining documentation of all COD action
4. Meeting at least twice per year

The most recent COD was appointed in January 2000 to serve through the end of the 1999-2000 academic year.

The AACC currently operates under the auspices of NCSU's Provost through the Office for Diversity and African American Affairs. The Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs supervises the director of the AACC and is ultimately accountable to the Provost for the overall operations of the AACC. At the time of this review, supervisory meetings with the AACC director were not held on a regular basis.

Review activities revealed a lack of clearly stated and consistently enforced administrative policies and procedures for managing routine operational processes. This lack frequently combines with inadequate long range planning to result in poor decision-making, ineffective problem solving, weak work products and missed opportunities.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The AACC was established as an academic unit that was expected to grow into a significant force for advancing understanding of the African American experience. In order for the AACC to meet its goals, it must have the organizational structure, administrative accountability systems and management practices to facilitate the successful completion of its work.

Even though foundational documents refer to the AACC-COD as a "policy-making entity", the details of its intended functioning clearly describe an advisory body that was meant to recommend policies and programs, monitor AACC operations, assist with securing resources and evaluate the unit's effectiveness. The COD has not functioned since the 1999-2000 academic year. Supervisory meetings for the AACC director have been irregular, at least for the last two years. Essentially, the AACC and its director have operated for the last few years without the benefit of consistent oversight.

While organizational deficiencies and ineffective administrative and/or management practices may have existed in the AACC prior the last couple of years, the Panel focused on the AACC's present and future needs for an effective organizational structure along with proper supervision, direction and guidance. The following recommendations are offered:

1. A new Council of Directors must be appointed immediately and given the responsibility of working with the AACC and the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs to recommend policies and programs, monitor AACC operations, assist with securing resources and evaluate the unit's effectiveness. This advisory body should be composed of faculty, staff students, university administrators and community representatives. The committee structure for the COD operations should be retained.
2. An accurate organizational chart should be created. This chart should show the relative placement of the AACC within the Provost's Unit, the AACC's relationship with the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs and the AACC's staff positions. Lines of administrative authority and accountability should be clear.
3. Clear and enforceable policies and standard operating procedures must be developed for all AACC operations, functions, activities and events. This should be a collaborative effort that includes the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs, the AACC Council of Directors, the AACC director and the AACC staff.

### **C. Programming**

Introduction: The most effective Black cultural centers provide purposeful, holistic and co-curricular programming with activities and events that are designed to enhance understanding of African American cultural heritage while supporting the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for optimal academic, cultural and social development. Such programming promotes student learning and facilitates outcomes such as enhanced self-esteem, leadership development, appreciation for cultural diversity and achievement of personal goals (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The AACC's foundational documents identified "Programmatic Thrusts" and described educational, cultural and social activities and events that were designed to facilitate the accomplishment of the organization's goals. Each program description was presented with objectives, statements of rationale, projected costs and implementation guidelines. Many of the original programs are still offered each academic year. The following is a listing of the AACC's current "programs":

1. Back to School Cultural Night
2. African American Heritage Society
3. Heritage Day
4. Heritage Lecture Series
5. Reggae Fest
6. Kwanzaa Week Activities
7. First Tuesday Jazz
8. African Marketplace

9. MLK Cultural Festival
10. Lawrence M. Clark Lecture
11. Black History Month Activities
12. African American Read-In Chain
13. Ebony/Harlem Awards of Excellence
14. Art Gallery
15. Saturday Program for Academic and Cultural Education (SPACE)
16. AACCTion Volunteer Program

The AACC's foundational documents prescribe a process for incorporating broad-based input from diverse constituents into the development, planning and implementation of programs, activities and events. However, this review revealed that faculty, students and community representatives don't have consistent input into the AACC's programming decisions.

Many of the current and former students who were interviewed by the Panel had very positive opinions about the AACC's programming and its impact on their academic, cultural and social development. For the most part, they don't recall systematic and organized opportunities to express their feelings about their involvement or to evaluate the AACC's programming efforts.

Other faculty and students who were interviewed questioned the relevance of AACC programming to their academic needs and professional development objectives. They don't see how the programs, activities and events will benefit them, academically or otherwise. Faculty members cited the apparent lack of clear and intentional connections between AACC programming and the university's academic mission as another reason for not placing participation in AACC activities as a priority.

Several interviewees, including some who offered praise, expressed the opinion that there appears to be a lack of focus, creativity, innovation and adequate planning in the design, promotion and implementation of AACC programs, activities and events. The Panel discovered that the "marketing" strategies used to promote campus-wide participation in the AACC's programs, activities and events are generally limited to e-mail notifications, fliers and hand bills. There are relatively few non-African Americans on the e-mail lists that are used to publicize AACC events.

There seems to be a general perception among many non-African American students that the AACC and its programs are "only for African American students". There also exists among some of NCSU's African American students the perception that the AACC only serves the needs of a certain, select group of African Americans: those who wear Africentric clothing/hairstyles and espouse "pan-Africanist ideologies".

Community members value the AACC's programming efforts and appreciate the important contributions that are made to the community's awareness of African American culture and heritage. They expressed concerns about apparent deficiencies in terms of adequate planning, timely notification and broad based promotional activities, all of which would serve to keep the wider community well-informed about up-coming programs, activities and events.

Throughout the years, efforts to evaluate the AACC's programs, activities and events have been inconsistent. The Panel did not find uniformly stated objectives and clearly defined outcome

measures that tie programs, activities and events back to the AACC's current mission and goals. The Panel also did not find evidence of long-range (3-5 years) strategic planning for program development and improvement.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Since the AACC opened in 1991, its programming efforts have been geared toward implementing programs and activities that were designed to enable the AACC meet its initial goals. These "Programmatic Thrusts" were outlined in the original foundational documents. Of the original programs, activities and events, the ones that are still presented on an annual basis have changed very little over the years. The apparent lack of systematic evaluation is of particular concern with long standing programs, especially those that require significant resources, like the MLK Festival. While new activities have been added during the lifespan of the AACC, the development of holistic, comprehensive, co-curricular programs has been limited.

From the perspective of defining a program as "***a cohesive set of activities and/or events that are grouped around an organizing theme or concept with pre-determined goals, clearly specified outcomes and well-defined strategies for meeting goals and achieving outcomes***", the Panel found that the AACC has a few organized programs. The other activities and events are separate entities that are individually connected to the unit's mission.

The AACC has not been programmatically innovative and long term strategic planning is limited. It appears that most of the organization's energy and attention are focused on the short-term goals associated with hosting specific activities and events. The Panel also concluded that the AACC has met limited success in its efforts to involve the entire University and the broader community in its programs, activities and events. Since one of this unit's goals is to enlighten the entire University and the broader community about the African-American experience, outreach efforts must be strengthened.

The AACC's programs, activities and events are not well supported by either non-African American students or by a broad cross-section of African American students. This may be related to the perception that the AACC and its programs, activities and events are "only for" certain African American students. Even though the AACC's leadership, staff and advocates may not intentionally transmit this message, the mindset exists and serves to keep members of the University community from reaping the benefits of full engagement in the AACC's programming.

Inadequate marketing strategies and ineffective promotional activities also lead to low turn out and poor participation. Subsequently, many excellent AACC activities and events go unnoticed by both campus constituents and the broader community.

The following recommendations are offered to assist the AACC with its efforts to its strengthen programming:

1. The AACC's programmatic mission should continue to support the cultural and social development of its constituents while strengthening its attention to the academic and intellectual development needs of students, faculty and the broader community.

2. It is of vital importance that students have a voice in the development, design and implementation of AACC programming. Steps must be taken to consistently ensure that student input is solicited, respected and utilized.
3. The AACC is encouraged to regard a "program" as a cohesive set of activities and/or events that are grouped around an organizing theme or concept with pre-determined goals, clearly specified outcomes and well-defined strategies for meeting the goals and achieving the outcomes. From this perspective, the AACC can re-design its programmatic offerings and re-package them into cohesive units that can be easily marketed and promoted.
4. Development of a long-range strategic plan (3-5 years) that emphasizes the creation of innovative programs that include a wide array of activities and events designed to further all components of the AACC's mission.
5. The effectiveness of all programming efforts must be systematically evaluated on a regular basis. This is as important for new programs as it is for programs that have been presented since the AACC began operations in 1991. Evaluation information should inform program improvement initiatives.
6. The AACC needs its own research agenda, which should have a direct link to campus academic activities related to Africana Studies and exploration of the African American experience. This research agenda, which should tie into Africana Studies courses as well as into the research interests of NCSU'S Africana scholars, can enable the AACC to actively contribute to the body of knowledge on the African American experience. As part of its research initiative, the AACC can help students compete for and utilize undergraduate research grants.
7. With the assistance of campus "collaboration partners" such as the College of Marketing and the College of Design, the AACC should mount a comprehensive marketing and promotional campaign that can accomplish several things, including
  - a. Publicizing the AACC's mission and goals
  - b. Informing the campus and the broader community of AACC programs, activities and events
  - c. Making a concerted effort to dispel the myth that its programs, activities and events are "only for" certain African American students.
8. The AACC is in excellent position to undertake academically oriented activities such as sponsoring intra- and inter-university research conferences featuring the work of faculty and students (both graduate and undergraduate) or producing a literary or scholarly publication that features campus and community contributors.
9. The development of a community partnership program that can help bridge classroom learning with life in the real world should be considered. Such a program can include internship opportunities or service learning in the African American community, both of which would benefit students and the community.

10. As a part of its mission to serve the academic and cultural needs of the community, the AACC should consider developing, sponsoring or co-sponsoring
  - a. Professional development activities for public school educators that promote cultural understanding and teach cultural competence
  - b. Community based programs, activities or events designed to facilitate a closer examination of issues surrounding the African American "achievement gap" and ways to close it
  - c. Cultural enrichment activities for pre-school children
11. A concerted effort should be made to finalize a full year's program planning as far in advance as possible (no later than March for the up-coming academic year). "Finalizing" planning means confirming speakers, detailing budgets, formalizing partnerships, completing implementation time-tables, identifying program assessment strategies.
12. Program development and planning should be intentional and focused. A few examples:
  - a. A program planning strategy that ties AACC activities to Africana Studies course offerings can provide an effective pathway for increased faculty collaborations and stronger student participation. Such an approach will add value to AACC programs with the further assurance that it is supporting the university's academic mission in a meaningful way.
  - b. Each year's programming can be built around a theme that has particular significance or interest to African Americans. The themes should be broad enough to accommodate multidisciplinary exploration through a variety of activities and events.
  - c. Programmatic themes can vary by month:
    - i. September – seminars and speakers to address academic readiness and student economic health, particularly for freshmen
    - ii. November – join with NCSU's Native American community to celebrate Native American Heritage Month with activities focusing on topics such as the Buffalo Soldiers and other African American - Native American collaborations
    - iii. March – partner with the Women's Center to co-sponsor activities and events that address issues that effect African American women
  - d. Six colleges can be selected (by some competitive process) to collaborate with the AACC to co-sponsor a month-long series of programmatic activities to highlight the academic interests of the college as they relate to the African American experience (for the months of September, October, November, January, February and March). This can include incentives for student/faculty

research projects, opportunities for students to present papers, academic competitions ("Quiz Bowl"), joint creative projects or an annual invitational conference that brings students and faculty from other universities.

- e. The AACC can collaborate with the Graduate School and the 10 colleges to co-sponsor a graduate school symposium for students who attend North Carolina HBCU's. Such an event can include faculty and student research presentations (students from other campuses and their faculty advisors can be invited to present), admissions and financial aid information, previews of various graduate programs, seminars, departmental tours, etc. A meal event (luncheon, reception) and some type of cultural performance can also be incorporated.

## **D. Leadership**

Introduction: Effective leadership is essential to the success of a unit such as the AACC. It is important that the director be empowered within the administrative structure to accomplish the goals of the unit. There must be clear accountability expectations for the director such that job performance can be assessed fairly. The director must lead long range strategic planning efforts and demonstrate the ability to translate the unit's vision, mission and goals into concrete initiatives and actions. The director should also be able to plan and manage the daily flow of activity in the unit through the effective use of the human, financial and technology resources. (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: According the job description contained in the AACC's "Organizational Structure" document, the director reported to the Provost through the Coordinator of African American Affairs and was expected to:

- manage the day to day operations of the AACC and perform administrative duties such as program planning, budget preparation and employee evaluation
- develop proposed procedures for the implementation of cultural and social events of the AACC
- recommend the person who will serve as the coordinator of the African American Heritage Society Council
- write proposals, contracts, grants, etc
- meet with and report to the COD on request

This job description calls for experience in "programming for African-American students on a college campus" to include "cultural and social activities for African-American students, faculty, staff and workers." Expertise in developing and implementing academically oriented programs was not mentioned.

The AACC currently operates under the auspices of NCSU's Provost through the Office for Diversity and African American Affairs. The AACC director is supervised by the Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs. A new job description for the AACC director was developed in 2001. It calls for the director to

- manage the day to day operations of the AACC
- perform administrative duties such as program planning, budget preparation and employee evaluation
- coordinate the activities of the African American Heritage Society
- coordinate other programmatic activities
- contribute to AACC outreach activities and informal recruiting efforts as a member of the African American coordinating Committee
- coordinate and facilitate AACC development activities
- teach MDS 101d / 102d, Freshman Advancement Seminar
- prepare reports as necessary

The AACC has had the same director since it opened in 1991. This review revealed no evidence of measurable performance objectives for the director. Past appraisals of the director's job performance were based on the director's summation of AACC accomplishments during the previous year. There was no evidence of any evaluation of the director's administrative, management, development, planning and assessment skills. The Panel did not find explicitly stated accountability expectations for the director.

Periodic reports from the AACC director to the Council of Directors and Annual Reports to the Provost's Office generally summarize AACC accomplishments, give updates on general unit operations, describe problems and challenges encountered, submit requests for resources and present ideas for future growth. The most recent report to the COD is dated October 1998. The most recent "Director's Annual Report" is dated February 2000. The director has routinely a lack of adequate resources and weak institutional support as the greatest obstacle to her effectiveness as a leader.

Conclusions and Recommendations: In order to meet its goals, the AACC needs a visionary leader who can translate the unit's mission and goals into purposeful and effective action. The Panel concluded that an accurate assessment of the current director's effectiveness to accomplish this task is hindered by the absence of objective performance standards and clearly defined outcome measures.

Other performance indicators that are indirect and less objective suggest that the director has done a great deal to advance the mission of the AACC. As the unit's only director since 1991, she has worked diligently to help the AACC meet its goals. While it is clear that the director has

been a valuable asset to the AACC, she exhibits limitations in some critical administrative and management skills. The Panel concluded that the director needs the opportunity to strengthen the skills that will enable her to be a more effective leader. The following recommendations are offered:

1. Performance standards and accountability expectations need to be developed for the director's position immediately. Performance evaluation criteria and an assessment process must be detailed.
2. Very clear and specific expectations for the director's current job performance need to be articulated immediately, with explicit performance goals and objectives. Progress toward the goals and objectives should be monitored on an on-going basis with periodic evaluation and assessment of outcomes.
3. In consultation with her supervisor, the director should design a professional development plan that identifies development goals, states learning objectives and requires in-depth training in areas such as creative leadership, effective supervision, organizational management, fiscal planning, program design and long range strategic planning.
4. The director will benefit from focused mentoring or administrative coaching that is geared toward strengthening her administrative and management skills.
5. With the guidance and support of the COD and the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs, the director must develop, implement, monitor and evaluate plans for staff development, program improvement, resource enhancement, budget management and marketing/promotions.
6. The development and implementation of campus and community outreach plans should also be an integral part of the director's job. Outreach efforts should be designed to solicit resources such as strategic partners, external funding, and higher levels of participation by campus and community constituents.

## **E. Human Resources**

Introduction: The professional and support staff should be adequate to accomplish the work of the unit. All personnel should be qualified to fulfill the responsibilities stated in their job descriptions. They must demonstrate the skills to perform their prescribed duties proficiently. There should be explicitly stated procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and evaluating all personnel. Work-study employees, interns and volunteers should be carefully screened so that their skills can be effectively utilized. Professional development activities should be provided for all staff (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The initial plan for the AACC called for the following full-time staff positions:

1. Executive Director
2. Director
3. Associate Director for Programs

4. Assistant Director for the Gallery
5. Assistant Librarian
6. Secretary

The "Structure and Organization" document presented job descriptions for the director, assistant director and secretary. These descriptions itemized job responsibilities, academic qualifications, preferred experiential background and salary ranges. There was a partial job description for the library assistant. There were no job descriptions presented for the executive director and associate director for programs. There was mention of the future need for a program coordinator "as the AACC evolves its operational sophistication". The present investigation revealed that the AACC was not adequately funded to fill all of these positions.

The AACC currently has 4 permanent full time positions: director, assistant director (vacant since June 2000), receptionist and program assistant. There is one part time permanent employee provided by the NCSU Library System. There are 6 temporary, part-time staff members, 2 graduate library assistants and 21 work-study employees. There is also a position for a part time graduate teaching assistant that has never been filled. The following lists the AACC's current staff:

- Director – full time, 12 months
- Receptionist – full time, 12 months
- Program assistant – full time, 12 months
- Graphics assistant – part time temporary, approximately 20 hours per week
- Office assistant – part time temporary, approximately 25 hours per week
- Reservation assistant – part time temporary, approximately 22 hours per week
- Program assistant (MLK Festival) – part time temporary, approximately 20 hours per week
- Gallery assistant – part time temporary, approximately 20 hours per week
- Accounting assistant – part time temporary, approximately 20 hours per week
- Librarian – part time permanent, 20 hours per week
- Graduate library assistant #1 – approximately 20 hours per week
- Graduate library assistant #2 – approximately 20 hours per week
- 21 work study employees – approximately 7 hours per week each

At the time of this review, there were no position descriptions for the temporary part-time employees. Descriptions of their job responsibilities and detailed logs of their daily work activities were requested by the Panel but never received. On interview, certain members of the AACC staff acknowledged that they did not have the qualifications and/or experience base typically required of individuals in their positions.

By observation, record review and through interviews, the Panel also discovered that there were no stated procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and evaluating personnel. The panel did not find detailed work plans or clearly stated accountability expectations for all personnel, including work-study employees and graduate assistants. The AACC recently instituted a new system for regulating and monitoring the activities of work-study employees. There did not appear to be a process for assessing, documenting and following up on instances of employee non-compliance with job expectations or failure to meet performance standards. The Panel did not find professional development plans for all staff members.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The AACC must be purposeful in its employment of the people who will be responsible for doing the work of its mission. The director should have sufficient full-time staff to allow for proper operation of the AACC. An organization that is primarily staffed by part-time personnel eventually takes on the aura of a part-time operation.

The AACC's lack of clearly stated performance expectations, detailed work plans and consistently enforced accountability standards frequently leads to failure to complete job tasks effectively and in a timely manner. The integrity of the AACC is compromised by the employment of individuals who don't have the qualifications, skills and experience base necessary to meet the demands of the unit's positions.

The AACC's human resource must be carefully cultivated and given proper guidance. The people who work for the AACC should be held accountable for job related responsibilities. and encouraged to grow professionally. The following recommendations are offered:

1. AACC staffing should address the identified needs of the unit and fill positions with individuals who have the qualifications, skills and experience base needed to effectively accomplish the specified work.

2. The following full time staffing pattern is recommended:

- a. **Director** – leads strategic planning; develops partnerships and resources through campus/community outreach; supervises full time staff; hires and evaluates staff; accountable for unit's budget, resources and progress toward goals; leads overall program development
- b. **Associate Director** – oversees gallery and library (staffing, budgets, acquisitions, exhibition and program development)
- c. **Assistant Director** – works with resident organizations, coordinates Heritage Society activities, supervises work study students; handles facility issues
- d. **Program Manager** – markets and promotes all activities and events; handles details of all programs; collaborates with web site developer
- e. **Office Manager** – bookkeeping, budget, processes payments and vouchers, contracts, payroll
- f. **Receptionist** – answers phones, greets visitors, handles room reservations, stocks office supplies

3. Updated job descriptions are needed for each full time position. There should also be guidelines and standards that govern the use and function of part time, temporary and student employees. Clearly stated job expectations form the basis for necessary employee performance evaluations. The work of AACC volunteers must also be planned and monitored.

4. The AACC needs to develop clearly stated procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and evaluating personnel.

5. The AACC should provide professional development opportunities for all personnel to include professional conferences, skills development training, seminars courses and workshops. Access to such professional development activities should be tied into an annual professional development plan that identifies concrete objectives.

## **F. Financial Resources**

Introduction: There must be adequate financial resources for the AACC to effectively accomplish its mission and goals. Funding priorities should be determined within the context of the unit's stated mission and goals and in light of available resources (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The AACC's very first budget request was not fully funded. Thus, the AACC began its existence in 1991 without adequate resources to meet critical needs such as personnel, supplies, equipment, furnishings and programmatic initiatives. Since then, the AACC has struggled to get the financial resources that were deemed necessary for the it to successfully reach its goals.

The Office for Diversity and African American Affairs currently administers the AACC's budget. Annual budget projections and requests are developed by the AACC director and submitted to the Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs. An annual allocation is made to the AACC from state appropriated funds. Over the years, the AACC has engaged in fund raising that has yielded consistent, but limited resources from grants, event ticket sales, in-kind contributions and financial donations.

During the course of this review, the AACC director expressed concerns about chronic underfunding from the Provost's Office. She perceives that her ability to control the AACC's budget is limited. She cites inadequate financial resources as the root of the AACC's inability to accomplish its mission more effectively.

The Panel did not find evidence of written policies and procedures that either govern the AACC's budgeting process or guide its financial decision-making. There was no evidence of annual revenue projections or yearly financial goals with measurable objectives. A defined process for fiscal accountability was not found.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Even when financial resources are inadequate, it is important that the AACC make wise fiscal decisions and employ rigorous accountability standards. The absence of pre-determined financial goals and objectives made it difficult to accurately assess the effectiveness of the AACC's use of financial resources. It appears that the lack of clear and consistently enforced budget/financial policies and procedures occasionally leads to ineffective financial decisions.

It is of vital importance that the AACC actively seek to expand its base of financial support. The following recommendations are offered:

1. There should be an on-going, aggressive and focused pursuit of external funding to assist in the creation and implementation of high quality academic programs as well as for conducting the center's own research into the African American experience. A strategic plan for this financial develop must be developed as soon as possible.
2. With input from the Council of Directors and the Office for Diversity and African American Affairs, the AACC must develop policies and procedures that will standardize operations such as designing budgets, making financial decisions and monitoring revenues and expenditures.
3. The AACC must develop annual financial goals with clearly defined objectives and benchmarks.

## **G. Facility Management and Usage**

Introduction: The AACC must have a facility that is adequate to support its mission and goals (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The AACC is housed in the Witherspoon Student Center Building, a facility that was funded by student fees and is operated by NCSU's Student Affairs Division through the University Student Union. As such, the AACC shares the Witherspoon Building with Student Government, the Student Media Authority and the Student Center Cinema. The AACC currently occupies approximately 1/3 of the total square footage of the Witherspoon Building (12,000 square feet distributed over three floors). The administrative office suite, resident organization offices and 2 classroom/meeting rooms are on the third floor. The library and gallery are housed on the second floor and there is a large multi-purpose room on the first floor. At the present time, the AACC does not pay rent or any type of "user's fee" for this space. The AACC pays for its own phone usage.

The AACC manages room reservations for the multi-purpose room and the two meeting rooms/classrooms. The AACC has policies that govern room reservations and space usage. In collaboration with the AACC staff member who handles room reservations, the Student Center provides set-up services for room configuration, chairs, tables and other equipment. The room reservation process is computerized and information is posted in a system that is accessed by the Student Center set-up crew. There have been recent conversations between the AACC and the Student Center about the AACC taking over the management of its own room and equipment set up needs.

Because of its status as a "tenant" in the Witherspoon Building, the AACC does not have ultimate control over the facility and has had to resolve problems and misunderstandings with the Student Center regarding issues such as building access, equipment availability and the timely communication of room set-up needs.

Several African American student organizations have office space in the AACC's administrative suite and are referred to as "Resident Organizations". As a condition of their residency, these organizations are responsible for sponsoring activities and events that are held in the AACC.

Currently, the spaces in the Witherspoon Building that are occupied by the AACC are not regularly visited or utilized by a broad cross-section of students aside from the members of the Resident Organizations. According to student opinion, the Witherspoon Building lacks the elements that would make it more appealing to general student traffic (food service facilities, entertainment/lounge areas and student computer work rooms).

The Facility Committee of the AACC Council of Directors was established to develop policy for the usage of AACC space, monitor the condition of the facility and make recommendations about facility needs and improvements. The COD has not been active since the 1999-2000 academic year.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The AACC occupies 12,000 square feet in the Witherspoon Student Center, a building that is managed by Student Affairs (through the University Student Center) and shared with Student Government, the Student Media Authority and the Student Center Cinema. In addition to administrative offices, the AACC has a library, art gallery, meeting rooms and a large multi-purpose room distributed over three floors.

A good working relationship with the University Student Center is essential if the AACC is to effectively focus on accomplishing its mission. Since the AACC relies on the Student Center for things like building access and maintenance, it is critical that communication between the two units be clear and unencumbered by the remnants of past misunderstandings. The AACC needs to exercise as much autonomy and control over its spaces as is reasonable within the parameters of its "tenant" status.

In keeping with its commitment to promoting the development of student leadership skills, the AACC must continue to provide office space for student organizations. The following recommendations are offered:

1. The AACC should designate a full time staff member as the "facility liaison" who will be responsible for communicating with the Student Center about facility needs. Procedures for documenting communications about facility needs and follow-up must be developed.
2. The policies and procedural guidelines that govern the use of AACC office space by Resident Organizations should be reviewed and updated where necessary
3. The policies and procedural guidelines that govern the room reservation process and the use of AACC spaces by other campus entities should be reviewed and updated where necessary.
4. If the AACC is to assume full responsibility for its own room set-up, the director must develop an implementation plan that details
  - a. the organization, function and management of the AACC's set-up staff
  - b. the process for transitioning from the Student Center service
  - c. a timeline for the selection and training of set-up staff
  - d. outcome criteria to be used in assessing the success of this operational change

## H. Resident Organizations

Introduction: Black cultural centers should facilitate the development of student leadership skills (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998). By providing office space for student organizations, the AACC promotes student leadership development.

Findings: The African American student organizations that occupy office space in the AACC's administrative suite are referred to as "Resident Organizations". As a condition of their residency, these organizations are responsible for sponsoring activities and events that are held in the AACC. The Resident Organizations get priority for reserving space in the AAC for their activities and events. The AACC holds an annual "planning retreat" during which the Resident Organizations claim dates for their activities on the AACC's master calendar.

During the course of this review, members of Resident Organizations expressed concerns about some of the conditions of their residency. They raised questions about the extent to which they are expected to provide programming for the AACC as well as the extent to which they are expected to provide services for events and activities that are sponsored by the AACC.

Students want a more significant role in AACC sponsored activities. Rather than being limited to tasks such as posting fliers and passing out handbills, the members of AACC's Resident Organizations want to contribute toward the actual design and development of AACC activities. Understanding that students are more likely to support and promote activities that they have an active role in developing, Resident Organization members want to help identify speakers and create innovative publicity strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Resident Organizations are extremely vital to the AACC, particularly as it strives to fulfill its goal of promoting student leadership development. The following recommendations are offered:

1. The guidelines for Resident Organization use of office space in the AACC space should be reviewed and updated. This should be done in collaboration with representatives from the Resident Organizations. Care should be taken to assure that the conditions for AACC residency are of mutual benefit to the student organizations and the unit.
2. The AACC should continue offering assistance to the Resident Organizations in their development and implementation of AACC-based events and activities. The AACC should consider creating a "Program Planning" pamphlet or brochure for use as reference by the Resident Organizations. Program Planning training workshops can also be offered.
3. Representatives of the Resident Organizations should be included in the AACC's long-range strategic planning efforts for input that goes beyond the selection of dates for programs. The vision of students is a valuable asset that should be respected and utilized to move the AACC toward its goals.

## **I. Library**

Introduction: A well-functioning Black cultural center must have the facilities and resources necessary to support its mission and enable it to reach its goals (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: An on-site library was an integral component of the original plan for the AACC. The foundational documents make it clear that the AACC's mission would be advanced by a library designed to house a collection of educational and leisure reading resources by and about Africans, African Americans and other members of the African Diaspora. The intention was to develop "a major research library focusing on the African/African American experience".

The AACC Library (also known as the African American Reading Room) is an affiliate of the D. H. Hill University Library System. It has a seating capacity of 24 and a collection that includes 4300 print titles, 172 video cassette titles, 22 periodical subscriptions as well as several audio cassettes and CD-rom titles. The AACC library receives a materials budget of \$10,000 per year from the main library system. Also provided by D. H. Hill is a ½ time librarian who is responsible for staffing the library, acquiring resources and supervising student workers. The AACC director, Director of Africana Studies and the AACC librarian collaborate on the selection of new acquisitions which are ordered, paid for, catalogued, labeled and delivered by D. H. Hill. The AACC pays for its own periodical subscriptions. Many of the resources contained in the AACC library are also available in the main campus library, but are conveniently housed in one area. The AACC has some materials that are not located anywhere else on campus.

D. H. Hill supplied the circulation computer, one public computer workstation and a computer for the librarian. The main university library also provides technical support and upgrades. The public workstation provides internet access, online searching of the entire NCSU library collection, online book renewal, access to course reserve materials and access to a reference librarian by online chat sessions and e-mail.

The use of the AACC library has increased significantly since 1995, when the ½ time librarian became part of the AACC staff. During the 2000-2001 academic year, 2546 patrons visited the AACC library, total circulation included 1554 books and 175 videos and 338 reference questions were answered by the library staff.

The AACC library staff includes one ½ time professional librarian, two graduate students (20 hours per week each) and 12-15 undergraduate work-study employees. The Panel discovered concerns about this staffing pattern, which relies on student workers. There have been occasions when the library could not remain open during posted hours of operation because student employees had academic conflicts and were unable to report to work.

This review also revealed concerns about the effectiveness of internal communication within the AACC and the availability of AACC staff assistance with publicizing library events, particularly those that are co-sponsored with D. H. Hill. The AACC Library also needs more storage space, expanded patron seating and increased computer access for students.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The AACC Library was established as an integral part of the AACC's overall mission. It currently receives valuable resources and services through its partnership with the NCSU Library System. The size of the collection has increased significantly over the years since.

The AACC library's current reliance on student labor compromises its ability to maintain regular hours of operation and can ultimately interfere with the unit's overall goal attainment. The Panel also noted concerns about internal communication and the need increased computer access for students.

The AACC Library has the potential to be more than just a collection of books, periodicals and reference materials. With proper guidance and development resources, the AACC Library can continue to grow into a dynamic learning facility that supports the academic, cultural and social mission of the AACC while helping the university meet its diversity goals. The following recommendations are offered:

1. The AACC needs a full time librarian/collection manager with an advanced degree in library science and expertise in African American Studies. This professional librarian will be a tremendous asset in the future development of the library's collection and research orientation.
2. In support of the AACC's academic mission, the library can be the venue for collaborations between D. H. Hill "instructional librarians" and the professors who teach courses related to Africa, the African Diaspora and the African American experience. They can work together to craft library assignments designed to promote the development of student research skills.
3. The co-sponsorship of literary events with D. H. Hill's community outreach program should continue.
4. The addition of at least one public computer workstation and printer would enable the AACC Library to be more responsive to the needs of its patrons.
5. The entire AACC staff should be involved in the development of a long-range strategic plan for the library. Such planning should clearly articulate the assistance and support services needed from AACC staff members and identify their responsibilities as related to the library's activities. The active engagement of the entire staff in working toward the future growth and development of the library will enhance internal communication and help the AACC reach its goals more effectively.

## **J. Gallery**

Introduction: If it is to successfully reach its goals, the AACC must have the necessary facilities and resources (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: The AACC Art Gallery was established "to promote cultural diversity through visual expression of the lifestyles and values of African American people". It was intended that art exhibitions would be the center of the Gallery's programming efforts. Each exhibition was to have a concurrent lecture series by and/or about the featured artist(s).

The Gallery Committee of the Council of Directors (COD) was created to establish policy, to advise the selection of works for exhibitions and to assist in obtaining gallery resources. Since the COD has not been active since the 1999-2000 academic year, the Gallery has operated without the benefit of outside guidance. There is no evidence of on-going collaboration with

NCSU's College of Design or other campus units in the development and implementation of exhibitions.

The original plan for the AACC called for an Assistant Director who would also manage the Gallery. This position has been vacant since July 2000. At the time of this review, the AACC employed a temporary part time gallery assistant. A description of job responsibilities and a log of work activities was requested but not received.

Since it opened, the AACC Gallery has mounted numerous impressive shows and hosted several prominent artists. It appears that the marketing and promotion of gallery events is limited. There is no systematic method in place for accurately monitoring the number of people who view each exhibition. All indications suggest that patron numbers are low and walk-in traffic is usually relatively light.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Since its opening in 1991, the AACC Gallery has mounted numerous exhibitions that featured the works of prominent African and African American artists. However, because of challenges posed by limited long range planning, inadequate staffing and weak administrative oversight, the Gallery has not gotten broad-based attention from either the campus community or the broader community. The Gallery is another example of excellent AACC programming going practically unnoticed.

The AACC Gallery has the potential to be a vital part of the NC State community. Strong collaborations with university and community artists are essential to the future growth and development of the Gallery. Also important are the roles of advisors, supporters and advocates who are external to the AACC. Gallery staff must have the artistic abilities, technical skills and experience necessary to facilitate the unit's mission.

The following recommendations are offered:

1. A strategic alliance should be crafted with NCSU's College of Design, the most natural "partner" for the AACC Gallery to cultivate on campus. In addition to contributing their own art work to AACC shows, design faculty and students can share valuable insights, experiences and skills and offer advise on the development of exhibitions.
2. Strategic partnerships should also be forged with local artists, other campus units and area cultural arts organizations.
3. Co-hosting artists' receptions and show openings with other campus units and community groups will assist in the development of a wider network of advocates and supporters who are aware of and involved in the Gallery's activities.
4. The calendar of Gallery events and activities should be complete at least one year in advance, with exhibitions that hang for 4-6 weeks and minimal gaps between shows. Long range planning provides ample time for artists to prepare their work. Long range planning will also help to cement collaborations with campus and community partners.
5. The Gallery should be managed by a full time professional member of the AACC staff, preferably one who has a background in gallery or museum curating.

6. The AACC should consider implementing periodic exhibitions of the personal holdings of NCSU faculty, staff and students who have traveled to Africa and brought back art, craft items and artifacts. Presentations, panel discussions and other public events/activities featuring the owners of the pieces on display will extend the educational value of the exhibitions. In like fashion, the AACC Gallery can develop a show of African American antiques and artifacts that are owned by members of the campus and broader communities.
7. As soon as the new COD is appointed and functioning, the AACC should look to its Gallery Committee for guidance on decisions about selecting works for exhibitions as well as for assistance with obtaining resources.

## **K. Technology and Equipment**

Introduction: A well functioning cultural center must have technology equipment that is adequate to support its mission and goals (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: Since the AACC falls under the purview of the Provost's Office, its technology needs are handled by the Information Technology (IT) unit that operates under the Provost's Office. This IT unit is responsible for providing technical support and assisting the AACC with anything related to its computer hardware and software. These services include installations, advice on matching equipment to the unit's needs, repairs, replacements and upgrades. The Provost's Office IT unit is ultimately responsible for the up-keep and proper functioning of the AACC's technology equipment. It requires accurate inventories of all AACC computer hardware (type and location) and proper registration of all software that is installed on AACC computers. The IT technicians expect to have access to the AACC computers when needed for repairs and upgrades.

The AACC employs a temporary part time technology assistant who is responsible for constructing and maintaining the unit's web site and providing graphic design services for the unit's fliers and other printed matter. A description of job responsibilities and a log of work activities was requested but not received.

One room in the AACC's administrative office suite was "designated as a computer work space for students' use". This room currently contains 4 computers that are not being used.

AACC personnel and the technology consultant from the Provost's office both cited communication problems and difficulty "connecting" to solve computer problems. The Panel did not find clearly stated policies and procedures for the placement and use of computer equipment. There does not appear to be a systematic process for documenting computer problems, reporting them to the Provost's IT unit and following-up to verify that the problems were solved.

Conclusions and Recommendations: In order to stay current in today's fast paced, technological world, it is imperative that the AACC have the technology equipment that will enable it to meet

its goals effectively. It is also critical that AACC staff members understand and adhere to the university's standards for the use of computer equipment.

The AACC must have a strong and dependable relationship with the unit that provides its information technology support. The following recommendations are offered:

1. A full time AACC staff member should be designated as the "IT liaison". This person will be responsible for reporting computer problems to the IT consultant and following-up to be sure that the problems have been solved.
2. The AACC needs to maintain accurate and current inventories that include type and location of equipment as well as the staff member(s) to whom the equipment is assigned.
3. The AACC director and staff members must allow the IT consultants to have access to all of the unit's technology equipment when needed for upgrades, repairs and replacements.
4. The AACC's decisions regarding the acquisition and use of technology equipment must be informed by experienced technology professionals who, by virtue of their credentials and knowledge base, are in the best position to offer credible assistance.
5. Professional development for AACC staff must include instruction on the proper operation of the unit's technology equipment as well as instruction on the university's standards for the use of technology equipment.

## **L. Campus and Community Relations**

Introduction: The AACC must establish, maintain and promote effective relations with relevant campus units and external entities. (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: Since it opened in 1991, the AACC has worked in collaboration with a number of campus units including African American Student Affairs, Africana Studies, The African American Coordinating Committee, Campus Cinema, D. H. Hill Library System, McKimmon Center, Student Media Authority and Undergraduate Affairs. The AACC has also worked with individuals, organizations and agencies from the broader community.

Many of the people who were interviewed by the Panel expressed concerns about the need for the AACC to improve both the quantity and quality of its relationships with campus and community partners. Some of the individuals who have collaborated with the AACC described being frustrated by problems such as late notifications and failure to complete preparations in a timely manner.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The AACC cannot flourish without the active engagement and involvement of others. Strategic partnerships are a necessary factor in the AACC's efforts to fulfill its mission. Even though the AACC has formed productive partnerships with numerous entities both on and off campus, there is a need for more. There also appears to be a need for the AACC to improve the quality of its relationships, some of which have been frustrated by problems that appear to be the associated with inadequate long-range planning.

The AACC must develop outreach initiatives that are designed to establish partnerships that may yield valuable resources and higher levels of participation by campus and community constituents. The following recommendations are offered:

1. The AACC should pursue additional strategic linkages, both on and off campus. These partnerships should be cemented by written agreements that outline what the parties are seeking to accomplish through the collaboration, what each party contributes and how each party will benefit. The agreements provide reference points for determining the success of the partnerships. Such linkages should be developed with each of NCSU's 10 colleges and other critical University units such as Career Planning and Placement, First Year College, Honors Program, International Affairs and Multicultural Student Affairs.
2. The AACC should also pursue more substantial partnerships with the Student Affairs units that share the Witherspoon Student Center Building.
3. The AACC should seek to strengthen relationships with faculty and students from African countries.
4. Efforts should be made to involve current and former NCSU athletes in outreach efforts and in planning AACC activities.

## **M. Assessment and Evaluation**

Introduction: A well-functioning cultural center conducts regular, systematic, objective and comprehensive evaluations of program quality to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission and goals are being met. Effective evaluations utilize both quantitative and qualitative data and the results are used to improve the program and services as well as to draw conclusions about staff performance (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 1998).

Findings: In every facet of the AACC that was examined in this review, the Panel found a consistent lack of comprehensive, objective and systematic assessment and evaluation policies and practices. Through the years, there have been program evaluations that primarily consist of participant ratings. There has not been a comprehensive self-study.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Proper assessment and evaluation is a critical source of information about an organization's health and effectiveness. Ultimately, the absence of regular and systematic evaluation compromises the effectiveness of the unit by limiting the availability of the data needed to make sound improvement decisions.

It is recommended that the AACC develop a process for thorough and on-going quantitative and qualitative assessments of all programs, services and activities. The director should develop this assessment plan in collaboration with the Council of Directors and the Office for Diversity and African American Affairs.

## What Next?

The AACC has the potential to become a very powerful force that facilitates the intellectual, cultural and social growth of the entire university community. In order to realize this vast potential, the AACC must become more actively engaged in the academic life of the university with programs, resources and services that make a meaningful impact on the academic success of African American and other students and faculty while it also contributes to the broader community. Focused attention must be given to issues of governance, long range planning, internal accountability systems, strategic partnerships and resource development.

As a comprehensive assessment of the AACC, this review produced a set of recommendations for strategies to help the AACC fulfill its mission by strengthening its status as a core campus unit. Action to implement this report's recommendations must begin immediately.

Due to the intensity of this review process, the members of the Internal Review Panel have become "resident experts" on the AACC. As such, these individuals are in a position to facilitate the next phase of the AACC's development through activities such as

1. providing general consultative guidance in the implementation of the recommendations presented in this report
2. recommending members for the next council of directors and providing consultation to the new group as they assume their responsibilities
3. assisting with the development of job descriptions and procedures for recruiting, selecting, supervising and evaluating AACC staff
4. collaborating on the development of administrative policies and standard operating procedures
5. working with the director and COD to design a comprehensive assessment/evaluation process

**This report's final recommendation is that the expertise developed by the Internal Review Panel be utilized in moving the AACC forward to excellence.**

## Concluding Thoughts:

It is imperative that the AACC retain its identity as an African American Cultural Center. A fully functioning African American Cultural Center is indispensable to NCSU's current mission with its stated goals of "building a diverse and inclusive campus community, fostering demographic and intellectual diversity, fostering internal and external partnerships and adopting an operational model that embraces efficiency and accountability". To these ends, the University administration must take the recommendations presented in this report seriously and must commit the financial and institutional resources needed to ensure their full implementation. To do so will benefit both the University and the broader community.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Internal Review Announcement**

#### Internal Review of African American Cultural Center

An internal review of the African American Cultural Center has been initiated for the purpose of understanding the Center's strengths and needs. This review will be conducted by a panel appointed by the Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs. The panelists are:

1. Mr. Robert Atkinson - President, African American Student Advisory Council
2. Dr. Thomas Conway - Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
3. Dr. Frances Graham - Assistant Vice Provost for Gender Affairs and director of the Women's Center
4. Dr. Clifford Griffin - Associate Professor of Political Science
5. Mr. Tony Knox - Chair, African American Community Advisory Council
6. Dr. Monica Leach - Assistant Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
7. Ms. Kimberly McNair - President, Society of African American Culture
8. Ms. Harriett Southerland - President, Black Alumni Society

The internal review will be facilitated by Dr. Theresa Edwards, Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and African American Affairs. A report of findings, conclusions and recommendations will be completed at the end of the review process.

## APPENDIX B

### Guiding Questions

This list is offered as a springboard for inquiry into the infrastructure and operations of the AACC. The questions address many of the issues that need to be assessed in the internal review process. Please note the following:

- This is NOT an exhaustive list and your inquiry need not be limited to just these questions.
- It is not necessary that EVERY question be answered (you will note some redundancy)!
- The categories listed below were created as a means of organizing numerous issues and areas of inquiry. They are NOT carved in stone and may be changed as the panel sees fit.
- Please feel free to explore any relevant issues in whatever way will best facilitate the review process.

#### A. **Foundations** (vision, mission, goals, objectives)

1. What is the vision that fueled the development of the AACC? Where is it stated?
2. What is the AACC's mission? Where is it stated?
3. How does the AACC's mission relate to the mission of the University?
4. How does the AACC's mission relate to the needs and interests of African American students, faculty and staff?
5. How does the AACC's mission relate to the needs and interests of non-African American students, faculty and staff?
6. What are the AACC's short-term goals? What will the AACC look like during the up-coming semester? How will it function?
7. What are the AACC's long-term goals? Where are they stated? What will the AACC look like in five years? How will it function?
8. How do these goals relate to the AACC's mission?
9. How are goals determined? Have they changed significantly in the last five years? Will they change for the next five years?
10. What objectives have been identified to help the AACC reach its goals, both long and short term?
11. What provisions/procedures exist for periodic review of the AACC's vision statement, mission, goals and objectives?
12. What provisions/procedures exist for the modification of the vision statement, mission, goals and objectives?

## **B. Programming**

1. What programs are offered by the AACC?
2. How do the AACC's programs relate to its goals?
3. How are these programs categorized (academic, cultural, social)?
4. Who are the AACC programs designed to benefit?
5. How does the AACC assess the effectiveness of its programs? What data does the AACC use in this assessment? Is there a standard process through which participants can evaluate programs?
6. How have programs changed during the AACC's life span?
7. On what basis are new programs developed and implemented? What standards are used to determine if a program is appropriate for the AACC to sponsor/implement?
8. How is program success determined? Which programs are most successful? Which programs are least successful?
9. To what extent does the campus community participate in AACC programs? To what extent does the local community participate in AACC programs? How is the level of participation monitored?
10. Are there any programs that directly relate to the university's academic mission?
11. Do AACC programs address the needs of our diverse university population? Is so, how?
12. Are there standard operating procedures for selecting, implementing and evaluating programs? If so, where are they stated?
13. Is there a systematic method for collecting, reviewing and utilizing the feedback of program participants?
14. How is long range program planning accomplished?
15. How does the AACC collaborate with other campus units in planning and implementing programs?
16. What outreach activities does the AACC use to attract new users, both on and off campus?
17. How does the AACC "market" and promote its programs?

## **C. Personnel**

1. What are the AACC's staff positions? (Full time and part time) What is the rationale for these positions?
2. Are these positions adequate to conduct the work of the AACC? Is this an effective staffing pattern?
3. Should there be other staff positions? Should any of the current positions be changed or eliminated?
4. Are there job descriptions for each staff position? Where are they kept?
5. How are work study and other temporary employees utilized?
6. How are AACC employees recruited? By what criteria are they selected? Are personnel selection decisions based on a match between job requirements and the candidate's skills/abilities?
7. Are there clear performance expectations for each AACC employee? Where are they stated?
8. How is employee performance evaluated? How often are performance appraisals conducted?

9. Is there a systematic way of dealing with employee grievances/complaints/concerns? Where is this process stated?
10. Is there a manual or document that presents personnel policies and procedures?

#### **D. Management / administration**

1. Does the director's management style facilitate the work of the AACC? Do the director's administrative practices facilitate the work of the AACC?
2. Does the director provide supervision for staff members? How is this done?
3. Are there regular times for the director to meet with individual staff members to review their work and discuss work-related issues/concerns?
4. Are there regular staff meetings? When are they held? What do they address? Who is required to attend?
5. What is the director's role in programming? Staff selection? Library acquisitions? Selecting gallery exhibits? Decisions about facility usage?
6. What is the relationship between the AACC and the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs?
7. How does the AACC director interface with the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs? How is supervision provided for the AACC director? In what areas is supervision provided?
8. Is there a systematic process for dealing with the director's grievances, complaints/concerns? Where is this process stated?

#### **E. Governance**

1. What is the role of the AACC Council of Directors/Advisors?
2. How is the Council chosen? Who ultimately decides?
3. What are the requirements for selection? Where are these requirements stated?
4. What is expected of the Council?
5. To whom does the Council report?

#### **F. Library/African American Reading Room**

1. How does the library operate?
2. How is this library related to the larger campus-wide library system?
3. How are materials acquired for the library? Who decides which materials are appropriate for this collection?
4. Is this library unique? Does it contain materials that are not available anywhere else on campus? What makes it attractive to students, faculty and staff?
5. How much is the library used? Which materials are most in demand?
6. How does the library (operation, collection) relate to the AACC's mission, goals and objectives?

#### **G. Gallery**

1. How does the gallery operate?
2. Is there a document/manual that presents policies/standard operating procedures for the gallery?

3. What is the procedure for soliciting exhibits?
4. Who ultimately decides which exhibits to permit in the gallery?
5. Does the gallery collaborate with other campus units for exhibits? How do such collaborations work?
6. How does the gallery's operation relate to the AACC's mission, goals and objectives?

#### **H. Budget**

1. How much is the AACC's annual budget?
2. What is the source of these funds? Who determines the size of the AACC's operating budget?
3. Are there sources of financial support that are external to the university (grants, donations, etc)?
4. Are budget projections completed each year? How do these projections relate to the actual size of the annual budget?
5. How is the AACC's budget administered?
6. Who makes budget decisions?
7. How are expenditures monitored and managed?
8. Is there a manual or document that describes budget policies and standard practices?
9. How do budget policies and practices relate to the AACC's mission, goals and objectives?

#### **I. Resident Organizations**

1. What are resident organizations?
2. What is their relationship to the AACC? How does this relationship relate to the mission, goals and objectives of the AACC?
3. Does the AACC provide supervision for the resident organizations?
4. What role does the AACC take in the operations of the resident organizations?

#### **J. Facility usage**

1. How is facility usage managed?
2. Are there written policies/procedures governing facility usage? Where are they?

## APPENDIX C

### AACC Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information that will be used in designing plans for the future growth and development of NCSU's African American Cultural Center (AACC). If you think of anything that may be relevant to this process but not addressed by this survey, please feel free to write your comments on the back of this sheet or e-mail [theresa\\_edwards@ncsu.edu](mailto:theresa_edwards@ncsu.edu) THANK YOU!!

Status (faculty, staff or student) \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/race (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

College/Department (faculty/staff) \_\_\_\_\_ Classification/Major (students) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I:** Please circle the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement:  
(0 = don't know; 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

1	Students can rely on the AACC for assistance with academic matters.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Faculty can rely on the AACC for assistance with academic matters.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	There is something for everyone at the AACC.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	The AACC's mission is relevant to the university's academic mission.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	I usually know what programs and activities are happening at the AACC.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	The AACC attracts a cross-section of NCSU students to its programs.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	The AACC attracts a cross-section of NCSU faculty to its programs.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8	The AACC attracts a cross-section of NCSU staff to its programs.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9	The AACC is well-organized and well-managed.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10	The AACC helps NCSU to attract competent African American students.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11	The AACC helps NCSU to attract competent African American faculty.	0	1	2	3	4	5
12	The AACC's mission is relevant to my personal development.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13	The AACC's mission is relevant to my academic development.	0	1	2	3	4	5
14	NCSU needs the AACC to help further its diversity initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5
15	The AACC sponsors important programs that enhance the lives of students.	0	1	2	3	4	5

**Part II.** Please give brief responses to the following (use back for additional space):

1. To the best of your understanding, what is the AACC's mission?
2. What types of programs have you attended at the AACC?
3. In your opinion, what is the most positive thing about the AACC and its role on this campus?
4. In your opinion, what things about the AACC are most in need of improvement?