



March 7, 2018

Dear HBCU Presidents, Deans, and Chairpersons:

As the President, President-Elect, and Past President of the [American Studies Association](#), and on behalf of the National Council, we are writing to invite you to become an institutional member of the association through a complimentary membership.

This invitation is issued as part of a new initiative to strengthen our ties with HBCUs and to involve undergraduate students more thoroughly in the work of the association, both of which we recognize to be distinctively important to the association's aims of representing and supporting [American studies scholarship and teaching](#), broadly construed. We would be delighted if your school would join us in working toward these ends.

Our hope is that you will join our community as an institutional member and share this invitation with faculty and students on your campus who have interest in the fields that comprise American studies.

It is clear to us as teachers, scholars, and intellectual activists in the academy and in our respective communities that the need for cross-institutional partnerships and collaboration is paramount in these perilous times. This invitation is not about increasing our membership. Already, between individual and institutional members, we are some 5,000 strong—and we are proud that people of color and indigenous scholars from across the country are active as members and in leadership roles throughout the association. We seek to involve complex and engaged perspectives on our nation and its several futures, but we cannot do so if the institutional homes we inhabit are less representative of the entirety of intellectual experiences across a range of academic institutions.

We are reaching out to you today because, while we are passionate about what we do at ASA, we realize that the association can be even stronger with more engagement from historically underrepresented colleges and universities. We often wonder what we could have done as an organization to raise a strong voice against the closing of Chicago State or protest the manufactured budget crisis at UNC Pembroke in North Carolina had we been able to work more concertedly with teachers and scholars across a wider range of institutional homes.

As we look ahead to the [2018 Annual Meeting](#), which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, 8-11 November, we eagerly look forward to welcoming and working with our new members. Organized around the theme, "States of Emergence," and with Roderick Ferguson (a proud alumna of Howard University) by then presiding, we expect the annual meeting to be both intellectually vibrant and thoroughly invigorating, and especially as a result of these membership initiatives.

Our hope is that you will join our community as an institutional member and share this invitation with faculty and students on your campus who have interest in the fields that comprise American studies.

Institutional membership comes with a range of benefits. As an institutional member, you will be able to extend individual membership to 10 students (undergrad and graduate) or contingent/non-tenure stream faculty, which will give them: (1) an opportunity to present their work at our annual meeting, (2) a voice in the direction of the association through elections, (3) a digital subscription to *American Quarterly* (the premiere journal of the field), and (4) access to a vibrant scholarly community. Institutional membership also provides discounted rates on advertising for job or fellowship postings on the ASA website. The memberships are \$170/year (but again, we hope you will accept complimentary membership), and proceeds help subsidize the association's efforts to produce and make available resources designed to help our members navigate the current and changing landscape of higher education.

If you have any questions about our initiative, or if you choose to accept this offer of complimentary membership, please email us at asastaff@theasa.net. Along with our National Council colleagues committed to working on this initiative with us, including Sharon Holland and Deborah Vargas, we would be more than happy to address any questions you have about the association and how we can all be better connected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours,
Kandice Chuh, President
Roderick Ferguson, President-Elect
Robert Warrior, Past President