



## Slavery and Justice Update

**March 18, 2011**

In 2003 President Ruth Simmons appointed the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. The Committee presented the final report to President Simmons in October of 2006, and the report has made a significant and permanent contribution to historical scholarship on slavery in the Americas, particularly in the northeast United States. The Committee produced a provocative document that challenges assumptions, sets the historical record straight and invites fresh consideration of the moral and ethical milieu in which major American institutions, including Brown University, were established and sustained.

As an outgrowth of that report and the three-year process of research, scholarship and community discussion that supported it, the Brown Corporation endorsed a set of initiatives in February of 2007, and the University has decided to respond to the report and is committed to the following course of actions:

**1. The University will commission a revision of its official history so that it presents a more complete picture of the origins of Brown.**

The University has hired a historian to write this history, and the University is coordinating efforts with the 250th anniversary committee.

<http://news.brown.edu/pressreleases/2011/02/250th>

**2. The University will disseminate the report and make it accessible to anyone upon request in a variety of media including Web, print, and CD/DVD free of charge.**

An executive summary was produced, and the report has been shared widely.

**3. The relevant materials used in preparation of the report will be held in the University's permanent archives. The University will ensure that its libraries and museums will have the resources to make the materials available to scholars and to present them to the public in exhibitions from time to time.**

A museum exhibition about The Sally was shown at Brown and has traveled to schools and libraries. In addition, the University established a fellowship for the Study of the Public History of Slavery and awarded the first fellowship to an M.A. student in the fall of 2008.

<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/sally/>

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/slaveryandjustice/>  
<http://www.choices.edu/resources/detail.php?id=47>

**4. The University will work with representatives of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island to form a commission that will develop ideas for how the history of slavery and the slave trade in Rhode Island may gain its appropriate and permanent place in the public historical record.**

A Commission to Commemorate the History of Slavery in Rhode Island was created in the summer of 2007. Members were appointed by the Mayor of Providence, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the University. Members of the Commission visited other sites, memorials, and exhibits that acknowledged difficult periods of history, and heard from experts in the field of memorialization. The Commission then reviewed options for commemoration and released a final report with recommendations on March 16, 2009. The Public Art Committee at Brown is currently reviewing options and locations and expects to have an artist and a proposal soon.

<http://news.brown.edu/pressreleases/2009/03/memorial>

**5. Through existing departments, centers, and institutes or through creation of a new academic entity, the University's Corporation, administration, and faculty will undertake a major research and teaching initiative on slavery and justice. Whether this results in a new center or the significant enlargement of an existing and coordinated set of programs should be determined through this process.**

In April 2008, Provost David Kertzer appointed a faculty advisory committee chaired by Professor of Economics Glenn Loury, and the committee submitted a proposal to establish an Institute of Slavery and Justice at Brown. The report was circulated to faculty and students for comment and discussion and was reviewed by the Academic Priorities Committee. A search is underway to recruit one or more faculty members who could, with existing faculty, participate in and provide leadership for the Center.

**6. The University will take steps to strengthen and expand the Department of Africana Studies. A team of outside experts in the field will be appointed to assess the existing program and make recommendations for its improvement, including the department's facilities.**

In the spring of 2008 a visiting committee provided advice for directions in future hiring. In the fall of 2009, the University hired Professor Chinua Achebe. In December of 2009 a Ph.D. Program in Africana Studies was established. In addition, infrastructure improvements to Churchill House have been completed.

**7. The University will strengthen and expand its program with Tougaloo College under the aegis of the Advisory Council on Relations with Tougaloo**

## **College.**

The Advisory Council on Relations with Tougaloo College developed a proposal, and Brown supported the construction of a “smart classroom” at Tougaloo. Brown also recently provided support for the research conference “Slavery & Struggles for Equality” held at Tougaloo in Feb. 2011.

### **8. The University will continue its program of providing technical assistance to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).**

Begun in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Brown will expand this program to include other HBCU institutions and invite additional universities to assist in this effort by providing academic and administrative consultants to support strategic and financial planning, academic oversight, administrative review, governance revisions and assessments, and other needs as defined by HBCU boards of trustees and presidents.

In this regard, Brown continues to maintain an ongoing partnership with Dillard University.

A report was completed recommending the development of an HBCU initiative, which is currently on hold.

### **9. The University will raise a permanent endowment in the amount of \$10 million to establish a Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence. The endowment will be overseen by the Corporation of Brown University, and allocation of funds from the endowment will be determined by the University with input from the Superintendent of Providence Schools.**

Brown committed to raise \$10 million for the Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence. The University also appointed a Corporation committee to oversee the fund and establish criteria for the awards. The Committee engaged with Providence Public School officials and educators to assess needs and opportunities. To date, \$1.5 million has been raised in support of this goal and approximately \$200,000 in grants have been awarded to programs in support of teaching and learning.

<http://brown.edu/Administration/fecp/>

### **10. The University will provide free tuition to as many as 10 admitted graduate students per year who, after successful completion of a master’s degree in teaching or a master’s degree in urban education policy, agree to serve in Providence-areas schools or surrounding area schools for a minimum of three years.**

The University created the Urban Education Fellows Program and enrolled the first Fellows in the summer of 2008 (3 in Urban Education Policy and 7 in Teacher Education). The first 10 Fellows graduated in May of 2009, 6 more Fellows graduated in May of 2010, and one will graduate in 2011.

<http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Education/uep/>

**11. The University will continue its support for the Providence public schools through an array of programs, including a position in the Office of the Superintendent of Providence Schools, for professional development of teachers, for curriculum development, for mentoring and tutoring of students, for gifts of equipment, and for other activities in support of schools and teachers.**

Brown has more than 80 education outreach programs described on the Education Outreach website at:

[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Education\\_Outreach/](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Education_Outreach/).

The University also affirms its historical and continuing commitment to contribute in meaningful ways to the health of the Providence and Rhode Island communities, especially its public K-12 schools.