

ASWAD BOARD MEMBERSHIP PERSONAL STATEMENT

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I am an Historical Sociologist who specializes in qualitative field research of Africa-inspired religious practices in the eastern region of Oriente Cuba. The sociological nature of this work is regularly questioned but I know that comprehension of African descendants' socio-political and religious realities cannot be fully understood by the abundance of quantitative and short-term (episodic) methods' currently in use by the discipline.

If elected, my commitment is to continue helping to establish our association as a premier collective of academics who practice active community responsibility within their organizational mission, goals, structure, and events. Since the earliest gathering at the New York University campus, my participation with ASWAD has enhanced an appreciation of the need for research and curricula to accurately reflect African descendants' reality. I wish to work with ASWAD to include others in such an enhanced understanding.

I bring attendance and presentation in five ASWAD Conferences and, although she was not as cognitive as I would have wished, my Mother attended the Dominican Republic activities. I found these and earlier Board experiences more invigorating than any I've ever been exposed; with the exception of my relationship with the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta, Georgia. Since my ASWAD bonding, it has been wonderful to see our association grow in efficiency, caring, and respected professional activities! I want to contribute to that continued growth.

I also am founding director of the African Atlantic Research Team (AART), a mentoring collective of students interested in earning the PhD. More than a few undergraduate Team members have been accepted through ASWAD's 'papers and sessions system' to attend biennial conferences. On one occasion undergraduates' paper proposals were accepted and they traveled to Seville, Spain to share research experience and findings with conference attendees. They were well received.

It may have been because of success with AART that I was asked to lead ASWAD's Mentoring Committee. Work with the Committee has expanded my network of professional others who share the vision and are willing to work. I led formation and inaugural activities of the Committee and we're now on a path to implement a groundbreaking set of mentoring activities at the 2019 Virginia conference.

I also bring consistent financial contributions, membership and conference registration fees to Board participation. As a new member, I would like to help expand the number of social scientists who participate in our work. Without abdicating ASWAD's goals and objectives, this group of academics has much to offer in conceptual as well as research focus. Perhaps a sub-group/committee of 'ASWAD Social Scientists' might be effective?

Lastly, as senior professor at my university, I bring a wealth of wisdom about the academic world that may enhance ASWAD members. I also may be able to bring self-supported budgetary participation, which could reduce strain on funds for such items as travel to meetings. In all, my candidacy for the Board is strengthened by experiences, competencies, and resources.