

Dear friends and allies,

How are you?

We had an entirely different newsletter planned for you before the world changed this spring. Before we could fully reckon with the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 virus on communities of color, we witnessed the murder of Black citizens by law enforcement and we waited for justice that didn't come. Please know our hearts and spirits are with you as we weather the uncertainty, grief, and potential loneliness of this moment in time

Black Lives Matter. We've had considerable discussions on our steering committee about what we as leaders in the Swarthmore community can do to better support Black alumni and Black students. In fact, many of us would not be Swarthmore alums without the [sacrifices and leadership of Black Swarthmore students in the 1960s](#) and SASS and SBAN members who paved the path for future generations of students and alumni of color. There is always more work to be done and we are constantly seeking new, innovative ways to engage and advocate. [Please read our statement of solidarity with the BLM movement on our website.](#)

We are reaching out to deliver some of the optimism and enthusiasm planned with our original outreach. We're still planning (virtual) gatherings; we still have opportunities to connect within the Alumni of Color (AOC) community; and we're still excited to share updates from students and campus partners.

First, we want to thank all alumni for your support. We launched our newsletter one year ago and received a wave of enthusiasm not just from AOC community members, but from white-identifying friends and allies as well. We welcome all readers in our effort to build a diverse, inclusive community and to dismantle white supremacy.

Second, you'll read below about many of the projects we're working on and priorities we're supporting. Now, more than ever, we need to sustain an intentional and vocal community. This spring, we made some much needed changes to our website and have identified some introductory ways for alumni to get involved at every level. We are also pleased to report on our first AOC-organized career panel.

We have big ideas planned for the next few years and are in talks with different College and on-campus stakeholders to bring them to life. If you'd like to get involved, please use our "[Say Hello](#)" form. We're working to use some of our at-home time to broaden our connections as a network and meet new community members

Thank you again for your enthusiasm and support. Stay safe and be well.

In solidarity,

Angela Meng '12, chair

Anna Mello '08 • Kevin Li '13 • Kimberly Mealy '93 • Kimberly Rosa Perez '18 • Kira Alvarez '05 • Laura Damerville '03 • Louis Lainé '16

[Alumni of Color Steering Committee](#)

Please forward this newsletter to others who may be interested, or have them fill out [this form](#).

Alumni of Color Committee Updates

Website Refresh

We've done some spring cleaning! Please check out our refreshed website(s). On our [homepage](#), you'll find a little more about our priorities and ways you can support AOC initiatives if you have a few minutes, a few hours, or more. We've also launched a [projects](#) page, with a more complete summary of our 2019-20 initiatives, including back issues of the newsletter. And finally, we're launching an "[AOC Spotlight](#)" series, which you'll read more about below.

Online Community Opt-In

Some of the consequences of COVID-19 are decreased opportunities for socialization and loss of internships/externships/jobs for students. If you have five minutes, please go to the [Alumni Online Community](#), and update your profile to include Alumni of Color (if you so identify), and round out any mentoring you'd be willing to do in areas of expertise, career trajectory, extracurricular interests, identity and affinity networks, and/or academic research.

Other group options include the [Swarthmore Black Alumni Network](#), Latinx (there is no associated alumni volunteer group — yet!), and the [LGBTQ+ Alumx Network](#).

We realize that identity is more nuanced than four checkboxes can accommodate, to say nothing of the intersections of those identities. This is our first step, and it allows us to work with the Alumni & Parent Engagement Office on best serving the people who identify as Alumni of Color. Raising your hand as a member of these networks also allows you — if you choose — to be searchable in the directory as a member of that community. More improvements are planned for the future, so stay tuned!

Community Spotlight

We're excited to launch our community spotlight series! We want to celebrate the stories of alumni from all walks of life with interesting experiences to share with the community, spanning the personal, political, and professional. These spotlights will be a Q&A format and will feature a mixture of standard questions and questions customized to the alum.



This newsletter, we're featuring Twan Claiborne '07. Want to recommend yourself or a friend for this spotlight?

[Submit your nomination here.](#)

Twan Claiborne '07 hails from Seattle, Wash. by way of Lake Providence, La. Currently residing in Harlem, New York City, they are an edutainer — an educator and entertainer, working as a Learning Specialist and drag performer. Outside of work, they enjoy seeing the sights of New York, dancing, drawing, playing recreational sports, and exercising. [To read our inaugural community spotlight with Twan Claiborne '07, check out our website.](#)



Student Connections

In what feels like another world, several alumni met with students on Saturday, Feb. 1. Alumni of Color volunteers based in DC, New York, and Philadelphia returned to campus for a pair of career panels focused on going to law school and working in the nonprofit sector. [Read more about the day, and how to get involved with future panels, on our new projects page.](#)

Many thanks to our panelists!

- **Kristina Alayan '03**, the Law Library Director and an Assistant Professor of Law at Howard University School of Law
- **Laura Damerville '03**, an Assistant General Counsel at the Smithsonian Institution
- **Arianna Freeman '01**, Managing Attorney at the Non-Capital Habeas Unit of the Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- **Syeda Tasnim '08**, Attorney and Deputy Director of Grants for the Urban Justice Center in New York City
- **Steven Larín '97**, Senior Director of Legal Services and Immigration Policy at the Nationalities Service Center in Philadelphia
- **Maria P. Mello '08**, Assistant Professor of Special Education at St. John's University in New York City
- **Karen Minyety '08**, Director of Care Services at the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia

SwatWorks

Career Services is offering [micro-grants](#) to students who complete 40-hour or 80-hour remote projects this summer.

- Is there a book/article/newsletter you're writing that you need edited?
- Need assistance with research that can be completed remotely?
- Need short-term support in advertising, market research, graphic design, or creating a stronger social media presence?
- Have you collected data that needs to be analyzed and you can't have the time?
- Always dreamed of your organization having a more sophisticated web page?
- Do you need coding or programming support?

We encourage you to think outside the box about creative projects that can be accomplished remotely: painting, designing, crafting, building, 3D printing, writing, etc. To register your project, please submit this [brief form](#).

swarthmore.edu/alumni

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