

## Editors' Note

Welcome scholars, artists, activists, and all seekers of Maat (truth, balance, and justice) to our inaugural issue! A collaborative invention, *Siyabonana* began as the result of conversations between Africana Studies and History faculty members at Tennessee State University, and Africana Studies faculty at California State University, Northridge, about the need for more discipline specific journals. Our concern began after the *Western Journal of Black Studies* (WJBS) released its final publication in 2018. Founded in 1977 as Africana Studies units were shaping their mission, the journal published articles from discipline defining scholar activists and researchers from John Henrik Clarke and Wade Nobles to Dona Richards (Marimba Ani) and Ashley Farmer. Our conversations intensified after the passing of Itibari M. Zulu in 2019. As the founding editor of *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* (A: JPAS), Zulu created and edited one of the only online free access journals for the discipline and published scholarship from quantitative studies to oral histories, all of which were unapologetically African-centered and/or were centered in the Black radical tradition. Peer reviewed, the journal attracted elders within the discipline, well-known community activists and scholars, and up and coming Africana Studies practitioners. When both journals ceased to publish scholarship, the need for a radical online disciplinary journal(s) seemed necessary and timely.

The founding co-editors of *Siyabonana* offer both a wide range of specialties and intersecting scholarship. Our desire is to craft the journal into a premier Africana Studies research entity. The editors humbly seek to position the journal, not only in the tradition of WJBS and A: JPAS; but we seek to add to the discourse published in *Journal of Black Studies*, *The Black Scholar*, *Journal of African American Studies*, the *International Journal of Africana Studies*, and *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Culture, Politics and Society*. In doing so, inclusivity and accessibility are of utmost importance. *Siyabonana* is, therefore, an open-access, online, peer-reviewed academic journal that publishes original research and creative intellectual work on key issues within the discipline of Africana Studies and across the global African world. The decision to create an online and open access journal does not negate the scholarly rigor behind the editorial decisions or published work. Each submission undergoes at least two rounds of double-blind peer review from experts in the given field, and a copy editor is assigned to every article.

Pan-African in scope, the journal publishes research articles, essays, commentaries, institutional reports, book reviews, oral histories/interviews, and other creative work that utilizes African-centered theories, methodologies, and approaches to not only examine critical issues, but to present solutions within all areas of Africana Studies, including the humanities, arts, and sciences. It simultaneously provides intellectual space for discourse about community social justice activist work and liberation struggles on the continent and within African world communities. Accepting intellectual and creative work from diverse scholars, activists, writers, and artists who resemble the editorial board's diverse training and scholarship, *Siyabonana* intentionally positions itself as an inclusive and affirming discipline-based African-centered entity.

The term, *siyabonana*, speaks to the intentions of this publishing community. Conceptualized in the isiZulu language as, “we see each other,” *siyabonana* symbolizes the best ideals found in the Africana world, that is, to see and respect the humanity and divine spirit in all of us. It is this essence that binds all of us, and inspires the co-editors and the editorial board members to use this journal as a means to challenge white supremacist hetero-patriarchy, and, in our small way, foster ideals of self-determination for African world communities and, therefore, humanity.

Finally, the journal, and this inaugural issue, are only possible because of institutional, infrastructural, and collegial support. The Dean's Office of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at California State University, Northridge provided the co-editors with a start-up grant in 2021 to begin building the journal's online presence. Diana Kae, our web designer, created a dynamic online infrastructure that reflects the intentions of the journal. Also, we appreciate our entire editorial board; Shelby Pumphrey, book review editor; K.T. Ewing, copy editor; and the council of elders, who ultimately made this journal, and this inaugural issue, a possibility. We, therefore, thank everyone involved in this process for their contributions.

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