



Grinnell College



POSITION PROFILE

Endowed Chair, African Diaspora Studies

2023



Grinnell College, consistently ranked among the nation’s best liberal arts and sciences colleges, seeks an experienced visionary, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as the Endowed Chair of the African Diaspora Studies department.

Under the leadership of President Anne F. Harris, Grinnell is taking key steps to create meaningful and lasting change. One of the College’s top priorities is the creation of the African Diaspora Studies department, inaugurated through an endowed chair. The study of Black life is central to the meaning of the nation, the Americas, and the world.



MISSION

When Grinnell College framed its charter in the Iowa Territory of the United States in 1846, it set forth a mission to educate its students "for the different professions and for the honorable discharge of the duties of life." The College pursues that mission by providing an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas. As a teaching and learning community, the College holds that knowledge is a good to be pursued both for its own sake and for the intellectual, moral, and physical well-being of individuals and of society at large.

The College exists to provide a lively academic community of students and teachers of high scholarly qualifications from diverse social and cultural circumstances. The College aims to graduate individuals who can think clearly, who can speak and write persuasively and even eloquently, who can evaluate critically both their own and others' ideas, who can acquire new knowledge, and who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good.

ABOUT GRINNELL COLLEGE

Grinnell College is a private, coed, residential liberal arts and sciences college recognized for its rigorous curriculum and strong tradition of social responsibility. Founded in 1846, Grinnell enrolls approximately 1,700 students, generally from all states and over 50 countries, in 28 major fields and 19 concentrations. Among the nation's small liberal arts colleges, Grinnell is widely viewed as an institution of the first rank, with an excellent faculty, a skilled staff, a consistently strong and diverse student body, and a well-equipped, beautiful campus. It is a national leader in college access, dedicating \$74.5 million in financial aid and being one of fewer than ten institutions of higher education in the country that are simultaneously need-blind, test-optional, and no-loan, making it possible to graduate debt-free. This is possible because of Grinnell's exceptional financial and investment management. Both Standard & Poor and Moody's Investor's Services recently affirmed the College's credit rating of AAA/Stable.

OVERVIEW

The Grinnell College community embraces intellectual journeys of all kinds and provides students with individualized guidance to dive deeply into their interests, define new directions, and move knowledge into action.

At a time when higher education has become enormously expensive, Grinnell maintains core commitments to access and diversity. Approximately 90 percent of Grinnell students receive some form of aid, and one in four receives a grant totaling at least the full cost of tuition. In 2021, the Board of Trustees renewed and reaffirmed Grinnell's long-standing need-blind admissions policy for domestic students and initiated the corresponding commitment to meet 100 percent of demonstrated financial need without requiring student loans.

Grinnell's commitment to civic engagement is embodied in its long-term commitment to social responsibility, as students learn the skills to enact change locally, nationally, and internationally. The College has developed programs and initiatives that encourage students to learn about and from transformative leaders around the world, exemplified by the Social Innovator in Residence program, which gives students direct opportunities to interact with individuals who have demonstrated leadership in their fields and who show creativity, commitment, and extraordinary accomplishment in effecting positive social change.

CORE VALUES

Excellence in Education for Students in the Liberal Arts

- Varied forms of learning, in and out of the classroom and beyond the campus.
- Creative and critical thinking stimulated by the free, open exchange of ideas.
- Education that reflects on its own process.
- Excellent teaching as the highest priority of the faculty.
- Active scholarship in traditional and interdisciplinary fields.
- Need-blind admission of students with strong academic potential.



A Diverse Community

- A wide diversity of people and perspectives.
- A residential campus in a setting that promotes close interactions.
- Personal and respectful interactions among all members of the College community.
- Meeting full demonstrated financial aid need of admitted and continuing students.
- Support for professional well-being of all whose work contributes to the College.



Social Responsibility

- Our strong tradition of social responsibility and action.
- Our strong tradition of self-governance and personal responsibility.
- Learning from and communicating with the world beyond the campus.
- Life-long connections that support friendship, work, and learning.
- Continuing to build institutional strength for educating tomorrow's students.



GRINNELL COLLEGE BY THE NUMBERS

- ❖ Total enrollment for 2023-24: 1774
- ❖ Student demographics from 22-23 Common Data Set: 51% white, 4% Black or African American, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Asian, 5% multiracial.
- ❖ 19% of Grinnell College students are from outside of the United States from 34 different countries, including China, India, Brazil, Jamaica, and Uganda.
- ❖ More than 60 languages are spoken at Grinnell.
- ❖ First-year, first-time retention rate: 93%
- ❖ Six-year graduation rate: 88%
- ❖ Total full-time faculty: 179
- ❖ Total part-time faculty: 26
- ❖ Faculty demographics: 50% female identifying faculty, 28% faculty of color

ACADEMICS

With its enviable student-faculty ratio of nine to one and its sound financial resources, Grinnell can pioneer innovative pedagogies that realize the goal of inquiry-based and experiential learning. Grinnell was one of the first colleges to replace distribution requirements with an individually advised curriculum. In close consultation with their advisers and informed by six elements of a liberal education, students plan their course of study by selecting courses from departments in the three divisions: humanities, social studies, and sciences. With a strong focus on the advising relationship, faculty members have an early and in-depth understanding of their advisees, and students are made responsible for the quality of their own education, an approach that emerges from Grinnell's historic ethos of self-governance and personal responsibility.

Notably, almost all students choose a genuinely balanced and varied curriculum, often enrolling in double majors or combining a major with one or more interdisciplinary concentrations. Comparative studies reveal that Grinnell students roughly equal their counterparts at peer colleges in the breadth of their studies, and significantly surpass them in depth. Inquiry-based and interactive teaching is encouraged, as is collaboration. The College's Center for Careers, Life, and Service (CLS) works with students to envision what they want their life to become and connect with ways of getting there. Working with students from before their arrival at Grinnell through graduation and beyond, the CLS provides guidance and resources that enable students to design a life that encompasses their personal, professional, and civic ambitions. This approach leads to outstanding post-graduate outcomes, with 57% of Grinnellians going straight to full-time employment and 85% saying their first job is completely or moderately related to their ultimate career goals. Almost 30% go on to pursue advanced degrees or continuing education, with the remainder choosing post-graduate service, fellowships, or other pursuits.



Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College **Beronda Montgomery** is a highly regarded leader in her field and a noted champion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and mentoring within the sciences and higher education. Recognized for exemplifying effective leadership, promoting faculty and student success, and fostering social responsibility and community engagement, Dean Montgomery serves as the chief academic officer, ensuring that faculty have the support and resources they need to do their work of providing an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas. She also plays a key role in the College's ongoing strategic planning, helping make decisions about the priorities and initiatives that will shape and define the College's direction in years to come.

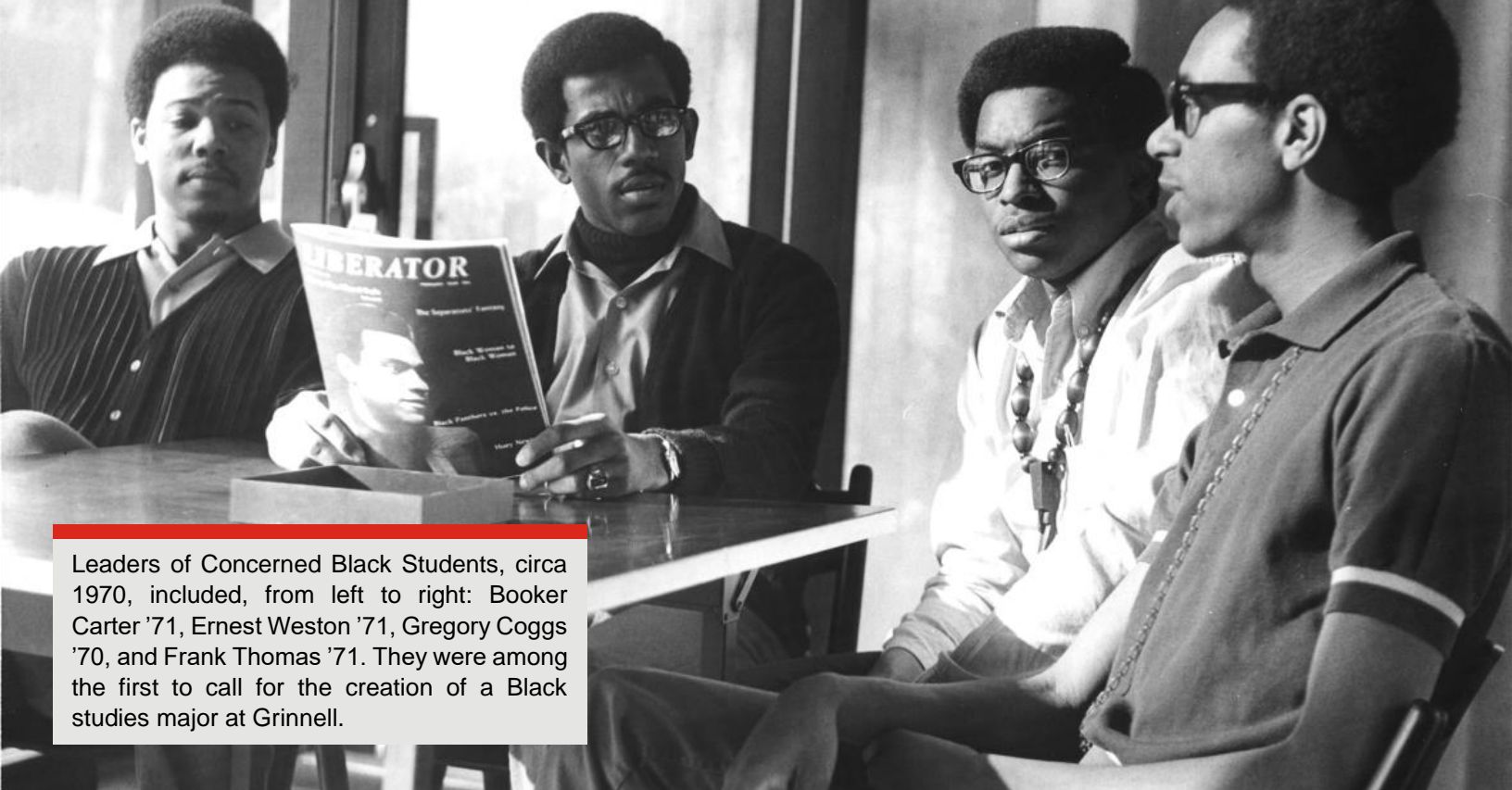
STUDENT LIFE

Grinnell's campus comprises 190 continuous acres and nearly 100 buildings in the center of Grinnell, Iowa. The last 15 years have seen great improvements and additions to the Grinnell campus, including an expansion of the Noyce Science Center and substantial renovations to many existing buildings. Most recently, a new Humanities and Social Studies Center (HSSC) opened in the spring of 2020, which includes inspirational indoor and outdoor public spaces and classrooms designed to foster innovative teaching and learning in the humanities and social studies.

In 2022, Grinnell College broke ground for an innovative Civic Engagement Quad (CEQ) - to be known as Renfrow Hall in honor of the first Black alumna of Grinnell, Edith Renfrow Smith '37, who was also a native and citizen of the town of Grinnell. The CEQ/Renfrow Hall will include spaces designed to boost collaboration between the Grinnell community and the College and will present a distinctive model for student residential living, education, and development.

On campus, students, faculty, staff, and residents contribute to a rich array of activities. There are over 150 student groups, multiple annual theatrical and music productions, 20 NCAA Division III varsity sports, and 16 intramural sports. Grinnell students have long valued the sense of community they feel on campus both inside and outside their classrooms. About 87 percent of students live on campus in College-owned or operated housing with co-curricular activities that enhance their intellectual lives. Grinnell is committed to collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals in thinking about the student experience and education in a holistic way that fosters the development of active global citizens.

Within this broader campus context, Grinnell supports a variety of organizations and activities dedicated specifically to support of Black student life. These include the Black Cultural Center, home to the Black Women's Library; Sawubona House; the Black Joy mixer; the Black Women's Book Club; and Men of Color Empowered and Engaged.



Leaders of Concerned Black Students, circa 1970, included, from left to right: Booker Carter '71, Ernest Weston '71, Gregory Coggs '70, and Frank Thomas '71. They were among the first to call for the creation of a Black studies major at Grinnell.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDIES

In 1971, the members of Concerned Black Students presented Grinnell College President [Glenn Leggett](#) with a list of 10 demands to improve life on campus for Black students and faculty. Among these demands was the creation of a Black studies major.

In the decades that followed, institutional offerings in Black studies at Grinnell were cyclical, waxing and waning over the years. The College created several programs, including an interdisciplinary concentration, Africana studies, which lasted almost a decade.

According to Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs Beronda Montgomery an exciting new chapter, spurred by student interest and faculty support, is about to begin at Grinnell as the College launches the Department of African Diaspora Studies (ADS), which was recently approved by the Board of Trustees.

The department will offer a curriculum aligned with Grinnell's commitment to social justice and human liberation. ADS will reside within the Division of Social Studies; however, its course offerings will be highly interdisciplinary. Coursework will focus on Black intellectual and cultural activity, drawing on past and present contributions from Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean.

"The creation of this new department — to be led by a senior-level endowed chair with plans for two additional tenure-track faculty lines — will provide permanence and continuity for Grinnell students and faculty working in this important academic area," Montgomery says, "Grinnell is making a long-term and significant commitment to create the Department of African Diaspora Studies, with a strong foundation and ongoing support," Montgomery adds.

The College will recruit a senior faculty member who will hold an endowed chair, which represents an additional investment in the new department. The chair will work, with guidance from an ADS steering committee, to design the new curriculum and major.

"This robust start demonstrates the seriousness and commitment the College brings to this expansion of Grinnell's academic landscape, in this moment," Montgomery says. "It's a deeply impactful endeavor to have such an investment."

Considering ongoing national conversations around affirmative action, critical race studies, and more, establishing an African diaspora studies department highlights Grinnell's commitment to diversity. [Click here](#) to read more.



THE POSITION

Inaugural Endowed Chair, African Diaspora Studies

Grinnell College seeks an experienced educator and scholar to join its rich, interdisciplinary, inclusive, student-centered community and anchor its newly established Department of African Diaspora Studies. The successful candidate may come from any disciplinary field or methodological tradition within the broad umbrella of African diaspora studies. As the inaugural occupant of an endowed chair, this pivotal leader will have the opportunity to drive strategic program development that impacts the institution and the community for decades to come. In collaboration with key campus and community partners, the Chair will articulate the vision for the department, lead the foundational design of a cutting-edge curriculum, provide mentoring and support for new faculty colleagues, and forge meaningful relationships with students that transcend the classroom. Fortified by years of thoughtful advocacy, preparation, and identification of resources, this new leader will be poised for transformative action through the launch phase and beyond.

Responsibilities

The Chair will:

- Collaborate with campus partners to articulate a comprehensive vision for the Department of African Diaspora Studies, including curricular priorities and pedagogical modalities crucial to building this vital new program at Grinnell College.
- Provide curricular and scholarly contributions to the intellectual life of Grinnell College.
- Cultivate relationships with partners nationally and internationally to integrate the Department of African Diaspora Studies into relevant communities and networks of inquiry and practice.
- Collaborate with partners on and off campus to ensure the support necessary to build and sustain curricular and co-curricular programming in African diaspora studies.

Required Qualifications

The successful candidate for this position will have achieved the rank of associate or full professor and will demonstrate a combination of the following:

- A record of scholarship, teaching, and service rank of associate or full professor.
- A record of excellence in undergraduate education.
- A commitment to undergraduate advising and mentorship.
- Evidence of an active scholarly life that engages key themes in African diaspora studies.
- Connection with and contributions to scholarly communities and networks relating to African diaspora studies.
- Engagement with audiences and communities beyond the academy.
- Administrative capacity developed at departmental and/or institutional levels.
- Evidence of collaborative leadership in curricular assessment and development, especially concerning interdisciplinary studies.
- Knowledge of alumni engagement and the work of institutional advancement.



HOW TO APPLY

Acceptance of inquiries, nominations, and applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and CV/resume for consideration. Parties are encouraged to apply by February 1, 2024.

All applications and nominations will be held in strict confidence.

Grinnell College is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and nondiscriminatory educational and working environment for all College community members. It is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in matters of admission, employment, and housing, and in access to and participation in its education programs, services, and activities. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, religion, disability, creed or any other protected class. Discrimination and harassment on any of the bases covered by state or federal antidiscrimination statutes is unlawful and a violation of Grinnell College policy.

To apply online, go to:

<https://theapplicantmanager.com/jobs?pos=su395>

For more information or to offer recommendations, please contact:



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ABOUT GRINNELL, IOWA

Grinnell College is located in Grinnell, Iowa approximately one hour east of **Des Moines** and one hour west of **Iowa City**, home to the University of Iowa.

With a historic downtown, independent retailers, and restaurants, 70 acres of parks, and more than ten miles of recreational trails, Grinnell is a vibrant community boasting a thriving arts and culture environment and plentiful leisure opportunities. Known for its historic architecture, especially the **Louis Sullivan-designed Jewel Box Bank**, Grinnell has been listed as one of the “coolest” small cities in America. In collaboration with local partner organizations, the College has made significant investments in Grinnell in recent years in public pre-K-12 education, childcare, downtown development, housing, health and safety, arts and culture, and recreation. Students, faculty, and staff benefit from the many restaurants, cafes, and small businesses that line downtown streets, including a boutique hotel and an independent movie theater that is co-owned by the College with other local investors.

Grinnell is listed among the top American communities in Norman Crampton's publication "The 100 Best Small Towns in America" and local entrepreneurs describe Grinnell as interesting and authentic, with a rich arts and culture vibe.

Local commutes are short and housing is affordable. The community is vibrant and friendly, which makes it easy to make connections and build relationships. Some faculty and staff choose to live in surrounding cities, such as Des Moines and Iowa City. To learn about Grinnell and these surrounding areas:

[Grinnell Chamber of Commerce](#); [Iowa City Downtown District](#) with its vibrant arts scene boasts film screenings, museums, and live music; and [Des Moines' East Village](#) is a historic walkable and bustling hub for shopping, dining, and nightlife.





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