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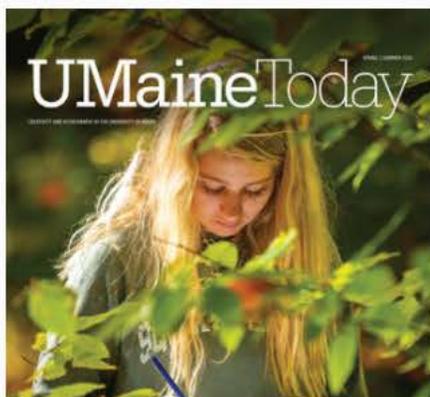
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UMaine Today



Academics Sanchez, Bracey to discuss impact of Black studies

January 15, 2021

In honor of Black History Month, the University of Maine Black Student Union and the University of Maine Alumni Association will welcome Sonia Sanchez and John Bracey to discuss the relevance and impact of Black Studies in 21st century higher education at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28 over Zoom.

Register for the free, public event at tinyurl.com/BlackStudies21. "Black Studies in 21st Century Higher Education" also will be livestreamed on the UMaine Alumni [YouTube channel](#).

Sanchez and Bracey were among the intellectuals who initiated the movement for Black studies in the 1970s. Reflecting on their decades-long commitment to, and work toward, racial justice in academic and community spaces, they will discuss the present moment of "racial reckoning," as it has been dubbed in the media.

Sanchez and Bracey will talk about the history of Black Studies, current urgencies and the relevance of Black knowledge, creativity and spirituality in higher education.

The talk is intended as a space for connection, reflection, and inspiration,

echoing Sanchez's invitation from her poem "Catch the Fire":

CATCH YOUR FIRE...DON'T KILL

HOLD YOUR FIRE...DON'T KILL

LEARN YOUR FIRE...DON'T KILL

BE THE FIRE...DON'T KILL

Catch the fire and burn with eyes

that see our souls:

WALKING.

SINGING.

BUILDING.

LAUGHING.

LEARNING.

LOVING.

TEACHING.

BEING.



BEING.

Here is my hand.

Catch the fire...and live.

Live.

Livelive.

Livelive.

Live.

Live.

The conversation will begin with an address by University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy and will feature some of Sanchez's poetry. In addition to the dialogue between Sanchez and Bracey, there will be time for attendees to ask questions.

Sanchez is a key figure in the Black Arts Movement, a multi-award-winning poet, activist and an academic who has impacted the fights for gender rights, racial justice and peace around the world.

Bracey is a former chair and current graduate certificate co-director at the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an award-winning academic and activist.

The university recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation, where issues of water and territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations — the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac — through kinship, alliances and diplomacy. The university also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.

This event is supported, in part, by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/ Distinguished Lecture Series Fund, McGillicuddy Humanities Center, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and departments of Anthropology, Communication and Journalism, Native American Studies, Political Science, Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

For more information, contact Lauren Babb, Black Student Union adviser, at lauren.babb@maine.edu.

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