



STATE OF NEW YORK  
**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
 123 WILLIAM STREET  
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 SECRETARY OF STATE

**The Amistad Commission**

*Ex Officio*

*New York Secretary of State Cesar A. Perales  
 NYS Department of Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr.  
 State University of New York Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher*

*Public Members*

*Robert Balachandran, Harold Bellinger, Nuriyah Angela Maria Boné-Owens, David Byer-Tyre,  
 Jonathan Cornue, Julius D. Edwards, Fredrick C. Harris, Sylvia Wong Lewis, Robert Lloyd, Jacqueline  
 Musiitwa, Geoffrey Prime, Enid Schildkrout, Mary Theresa Streck, James Turner*

**9<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**

**State of New York Department of State**

**NYC: 123 William Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor Executive Suite, New York, NY 10038-3804  
 ALBANY: One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Ave, Suite 1120, Albany, NY 12231**

**Webpage: [www.dos.ny.gov/amistad](http://www.dos.ny.gov/amistad)**

**View Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jj35vJy61Hg>**

**Thursday, October 16, 2014  
 10:30 A.M.**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

I CALL TO ORDER  
 10:39 a.m.

II INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES/PARTICIPANTS  
*Ex Officio*

Teneka Frost-Amusa (for Secretary of State Cesar Perales, NYS Department of State)  
 Patricia Polan (for Commissioner John King, NYS Education Department)

***Public Members***

Nuriyah Angela Maria Boné-Owens (via phone)	Sylvia Wong Lewis (in person)
Geoffrey Prime (via phone)	James Turner (via phone)
Mary Theresa Streck (in person)	

***In Attendance***

Edison Alban (New York State Department of State)  
Reva Narula (New York State Department of State)

Teneka Frost-Amusa, Associate Counsel at the New York State Department of State, informed the Amistad Commission members that she was designated chair of the Commission, representing Secretary of State Cesar Perales and replacing past chair, Nina DiSalvo.

### III SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

#### **Website Redesign** (Sylvia Wong Lewis, Chair)

Edison Alban discussed the status of the Commission's website and reported that the Subcommittee continues to provide ongoing maintenance and updating of new content, resources, current events and visual materials. He also reiterated the need for continued content submission including, but not limited to legislation, images, books, etc. from Commission members.

Mr. Alban mentioned that although there is a current statewide freeze on website development, the Commission's website could benefit from a redesign to include a calendar of events page, informing the public of ongoing educational and cultural opportunities around the state that are related to the goals of the Commission and adding topic and subject tabs that would categorize the information, making the website more user-friendly. Mr. Alban suggested that structuring the new website can be accomplished by Subcommittee now with the freeze in place. Nuriyah Angela Maria Boné-Owens also suggested that the website be divided into at least two major categories, PK-12 and Life-long learning, to address the needs of our youth and their core curriculum and those groups in the post-secondary and public domain who may benefit from resources for professional development or continuing education in the field.

Sylvia Wong Lewis encouraged submissions of news items of interest to the African American community and suggested that materials that are not limited to the topic of slavery (e.g. text books, the business aspect of slavery) also be included on the Commission's website. She suggested that the information on the website be expanded to other areas of contributions made by African Americans during other stages of development of our country such as veterans and contributions made by African Americans during war time. Ms. Wong Lewis also mentioned that there have been several recent books on the business side of slavery, which should be included on the Commission's website. One such book, suggested by James Turner, entitled "The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism," by Edward Baptiste was recommended for posting on the Commission's website.

Ms. Wong Lewis also suggested that a volunteer not-for-profit group called "Coming to the Table," which is a national organization dedicated to providing reconciliation and healing from racism that is rooted in the United States' history of slavery, be listed on the website as a resource.

Nuriyah Angela Maria Boné-Owens opined that the resources on the website should not be limited to books, but information surrounding the awareness of ongoing initiatives dealing with African American history. She mentioned NY Congressman Daniel Maffei's efforts to pass legislation to establish the Harriet Tubman National Park in Auburn, NY and information about cultural resource surveys and the freedom trail as examples of information to be added to the Commission's website.

#### **Educational and Cultural Resources** (David Byer-Tyre, Chair)

Ms. Boné-Owens reported that although the Educational and Cultural Resources Committee needs to meet more frequently as a group, she had a number of suggestions for the committee.

Ms. Boné-Owens mentioned that she would like to see the freedom trail expanded. She suggested that expansion could be accomplished by compiling a short list of 6-12 counties that would be willing to have cultural resource surveys conducted in their counties. This survey will serve as a foundation for a cultural/ heritage tourism map. The survey has already been conducted in the counties of Osage, Oswego and perhaps Madison; nonetheless, Ms. Boné-Owens emphasized that the freedom trail needs to be expanded by accumulating academic documentation and basis in each county. Second, she recommended incorporating new academic research in the field of African American study. Third, Ms. Boné-Owens suggested that funding for the subcommittee needs to be discussed. And fourth, she encouraged the subcommittee to continue the work of the commission by going beyond recommendations and extending work to the year 2020.

### **Educator Input** (Jonathan Cornue, Chair)

Mr. Geoffrey Prime agreed to be placed on the Educator Input subcommittee; this particular committee seeks educational professionals input on what is available and what is needed to do their part in imparting Amistad related information.

Ms. Boné-Owens made a recommendation to include a questionnaire on the Commission's website that would allow "expert" volunteers to provide their information for the purpose of compiling a roster of individual volunteers to share information with students and teachers regarding the African American experience, as outlined in the statute creating the Commission. Ms. Frost-Amusa indicated that the Department of State would work on creating the questionnaire for review and approval of the Commission at its next meeting. This questionnaire will also be included as a deliverable in the Commission's report.

## **IV DRAFT OUTLINE OF COMMISSION REPORT**

Ms. Frost-Amusa referenced the 2010 Report Draft that was written by the Commission, but never published. Ms. Frost-Amusa indicated that the 2010 would be a starting point for a new report, although some of the information from the 2010 Report is unavailable or outdated.

Ms. Frost-Amusa requested an update from the State Education Department regarding the draft outline of the commission report. Ms. Polan reported that the NYS K-12 Social Studies framework, which was adopted by the Board of Regents, follows the Amistad Commission's recommendation for inclusion of African-American history throughout the courses of study in United States history and that this inclusion can be found in grades four, seven, eight and eleven.

Ms. Frost-Amusa indicated that the next steps for completing the report would be the development of an outline of the report, drafted by the Department of State, with anticipation of having a final report ready within the next couple of months. The new report will be drafted by the Department of State and the State Education Department.

Ms. Frost-Amusa stated that essentially, the items needed in the report would include:

- development of the website and use of the website by the public and the plans for the website;
- the actual curriculum changes that have occurred regarding common core and the infusion of the African American experience in the curriculum given the standards that have changed;
- an overview of what the Commission has done since its inception, including a summary of meetings and structural changes since the 2010 report; and

- any findings and/or recommendations that the Commission wants to keep from the 2010 Report or any additional recommendations from the Commission to include in a draft of the report.

Ms. Frost-Amusa indicated that she would like input from the Commission regarding its findings and recommendations to be included in the new report. She suggested that Commission members review the findings and recommendations that are currently in the 2010 Draft Report and see if the Commission believes they are still relevant. Ms. Polan stated that there may be an issue accessing information in the 2010 Draft Report, which was prepared by her predecessor at the State Education Department because of technical issues. Such information contained therein includes the bibliography and biographical dictionary that were mentioned in the Draft 2010 Report from the Commission. This may need to be omitted from the new report.

In addition, Ms. Polan and Ms. Wong Lewis recommended implementing a quick Survey Monkey survey asking educators how they go about discussing African American history and cultural history in the classroom. A budget should also be attached to any recommendations that will include additional resources. Ms. Boné-Owens suggested that such recommendations be generated on a subcommittee level, thus, giving the committee a chance to co-collaborate around specific areas. The Commission agreed that findings and recommendations for the new report will be generated through the subcommittee structure of the Commission.

## V MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. Frost-Amusa recommended, to which the Commission agreed, that all subcommittees commence a meeting prior to the next Commission meeting, scheduled for November 20, 2014, to discuss findings/recommendations to be included in the Commission's new report. At this meeting, a draft report, which is being drafted by the Department of State with assistance from the State Education Department, will be presented and discussion with input from the subcommittee meetings. The draft report will primarily consist of an update to the 2010 Draft Report presented at this meeting with findings and recommendations.

The next meeting of the Amistad Commission is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 10:30 a.m.; the meeting to follow is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2014.

Ms. Boné-Owens also acknowledged that October 16<sup>th</sup> is the Million Man March on Washington Anniversary.

## VI ADJOURN 11:43 a.m.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

*1. Amistad Commission Contact Information – Updated 10/20142. Amistad Subcommittee Structure – Updated 10/2014*

#### **ATTACHMENT 1**

#### ***Amistad Commission Contact Information***

***Updated October, 2014***

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## ATTACHMENT 2

### *Amistad Subcommittee Structure*

**Website ReDesign.** Focusing on website design, the Website Redesign Subcommittee will create a robust and user friendly interface which explains the rationale for the formation and work of the Commission and links to, among others, SUNY, NYSED, and those institutions and organizations which can provide the public and educators with the resources they need to understand and place in context the African American experience in America and its broad implications for our culture and society today:

*Subcommittee Liaison:* Laz Benitez, [ [laz.benitez@dos.ny.gov](mailto:laz.benitez@dos.ny.gov) ]

*Members:* Sylvia Wong Lewis, Chair, [ [sylviawonglewis@aol.com](mailto:sylviawonglewis@aol.com) ]

Jonathan Cornue, Co-chair, [ [jcornue@moboces.org](mailto:jcornue@moboces.org) ]

Mary Theresa Streck, Co-chair, [ [mtstreck@gmail.com](mailto:mtstreck@gmail.com) ]

**Educational and Cultural Resources.** The Educational and Cultural Resources Subcommittee will further develop a listing of resources, including, among other things, museums, historic places, educational entities and “expert” volunteers willing to impart information. The the greatest extent practicable, resource listings will be developed for all regions of the State.

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*Members:* David Byer-Tyre, Chair, [ [dbyertyre@yahoo.com](mailto:dbyertyre@yahoo.com) ]

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Nuriyah Angela Maria Boné-Owens, Co-chair, [ [nuriyahwind@hotmail.com](mailto:nuriyahwind@hotmail.com) ]

**Educator Input.** The Educator Input Subcommittee will seek education professionals’ input on what is currently available and what is needed to do their part in imparting Amistad related information.

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