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Inspiration at the heart of African-American Celebration Month

By **Dave Groves**, news editor

Long before the American people went to the polls last November, members of Oakland University's African-American Celebration Month Committee had decided on a theme for this year's celebration.

They chose "The Journey of Black Economic & Political Empowerment" not knowing just how timely and appropriate it would be.

"Barack (Obama) just brought it full circle for us," said Omar Brown-El, director of OU's Center for Multicultural Initiatives. He added that on the eve of the nation welcoming its first-ever African-American president, anyone with great aspirations has reason to be inspired.

"It really says to our students and our young people that the things they dream to do, the things they value in terms of their education and their goals – those things truly can become a reality."

Beginning on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Monday, Jan. 19 – and running through Feb. 19, African-American Celebration Month includes a wide and diverse array of activities.

Kicking things off will be the presentation of **Keeper of the Dream** Scholarship Awards to four Oakland students. Following this, famed actor, producer and human rights activist Danny Glover will deliver the celebration's keynote address.

"We're expecting a large audience ... and I'm just really looking forward to the message," said DeAndre Shephard, an OU athletics academic advisor and AAMC Committee co-chair. "Hopefully he can share something about his dreams."

Other notable visitors to campus throughout the month include Dr. Ben Carson, one of the world's most respected neurosurgeons, and Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy.

Thought-provoking panel discussions, exhibits and cultural activities round out the schedule. Among the most popular of these events is "A Taste of Africa Gala," which in previous years has drawn considerable attendance.

"It's really a very festive atmosphere that celebrates the rich and colorful culture of the African diaspora," Brown-El explained.

For more information on African-American Celebration Month activities and a printable schedule of events, visit www.oakland.edu/aacm.

SUMMARY

A wide array of activities have been planned to help foster an appreciation for the diversity and different cultures represented at Oakland University.

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