They are, in essence, compromises between the values of the conservatives and liberals, black and white. But they are compromises that have not satisfied any group. Radical critics of such programs are unhappy because they have no academic or political "clout". Few of them are tenure-granting units and most of them are denied the academic legitimacy they deserve. The conservative critics—non-Blacks and Blacks alike—refuse to take them seriously, in any case, believing firmly that they are unfortunate enclaves in academic communities, justified only because of the desire to stem the tide of Black militancy.

The Spurr study committee had joined this debate officially when it made its deliberations the topic of a conference held at the University of Michigan in May, 1969. By the summer of the same year, the plan to establish a Program in Afro-American Studies was inaugurated with its main feature being a year-long course on Afro-American History. Harold Cruse, whose Crisis of the Negro Intellectual (published in 1967) had made him one of the most widely read Black historians and social critics, was recruited to serve as the Program's first director.

The Black Action Movement (BAM), a coalition of Black student organizations, formed during the 1969-70 academic year for the purpose of lobbying on behalf of increased Black enrollment, recruitment of Black faculty, and increase of supportive academic services for Black students enrolled at the University of Michigan, included as one of its "Demands" the establishment at the University of a full-fledged Center for Afro-American Studies. The Proposal for this Center was drawn up by J. Frank Yates, Assistant to the Dean of L.S.A.