The Yates Proposal, adopted by BAM, called for a Center for Afro-American Studies with three basic components, namely, research, teaching, and service. Later, in response to arguments put forth by Gloria Marshall (Niara Sudarkasa), then Assistant Professor of Anthropology, a fourth component concerned specifically with African Studies was added to the Center's structure. The function of the Research component "would be to foster and to coordinate research at the University dealing with the black experience and black people within the United States, both from a historical and a modern perspective." Although the Center would be concerned with some "programmatic research" as well, it was conceived primarily as a research "clearing house" whose "publications would be a vehicle for the dissemination of information and research findings." The Teaching component "would serve as a coordinating body for instruction in Afroamerican topics both at the graduate and the undergraduate level(s)." The Service component "would be a mechanism by which the skills of individuals at the University could be devoted to special community concerns, and through which a certain number of students might gain internship experience, particularly in the social sciences, through work in the community." The Africa component "would be concerned with Africa and its relationship to the modern and historical American situation." Thus, the original idea was broadened into a proposal for a Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (henceforth, CAAS).

CAAS was to be run by "a Director assisted by Chairmen (who were officially appointed as 'Associate Directors') designated for the four major areas of activity: Research, Teaching, Service and African Studies."

With the exception of the research staff and visiting lecturers who might