

Access to this work was provided by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) ScholarWorks@UMBC digital repository on the Maryland Shared Open Access (MD-SOAR) platform.

Please provide feedback

Please support the ScholarWorks@UMBC repository by emailing [scholarworks-group@umbc.edu](mailto:scholarworks-group@umbc.edu) and telling us what having access to this work means to you and why it's important to you. Thank you.

## UMBC's Gloria Chuku is named the 2020 – 21 Lipitz Professor for her research on the Igbo people of Nigeria

**Gloria Chuku**, chair and professor of Africana studies, has been named **UMBC's Lipitz Professor** of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) for 2020 – 21. This distinguished professorship, funded by Roger C. Lipitz and the Lipitz Family Foundation, recognizes and supports innovative teaching and research. During her professorship, Chuku will carry out research for her new book project, *Becoming Igbo in Nigeria and the Diaspora: A History of Ethnic Identity Formation and Negotiation*.



UMBC faculty and staff retreat, summer 2017. *Photo by Marlayna Demond '11.*

“I am humbled and grateful for my colleagues’ recognition of my contributions to the Africana studies department, CAHSS, and UMBC; to my profession; and to the fields of Igbo and Nigerian histories, African studies, and gender studies,” shares Chuku. “I feel validated.”

In the span of thirty years, Chuku's internationally-renowned scholarship and teaching has explored the topics of ethno-nationalism, gender, economics, decolonization, conflict, and African-centered epistemological traditions of the Igbo people, the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria.

## **Scholarship on Igbo culture**

Chuku will spend time studying the Commonwealth and African manuscripts at Oxford University's Bodleian Libraries in the coming year. She will also do archival research at The National Archives in London. Chuku will then return to the United States to review the unpublished papers on the Igbo people at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies at Northwestern University.

This research will inform the writing of Chuku's second book, about the processes of Igbo ethnic identity formation, negotiation, and integration across time. This includes Igbo identity within Nigeria and the global diaspora.

Chuku's first book, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900 – 1960* (Routledge, 2005), remains the most comprehensive study on Igbo women, covering all Igbo subculture zones. As a result of her work she was the **first woman to receive the prestigious Ali Mazrui Award for Scholarship and Research Excellence** in 2017. This international award recognizes a pre-eminent scholar of African studies for their research and scholarly achievement.



Chuku's 2017 Ali Mazrui Award. *Photo courtesy of Chuku.*

## **Enriching UMBC**

In addition to her research, Chuku has been a vibrant part of the UMBC community. As affiliate professor in gender, women's, and sexuality studies and language, literacy, and culture, she has served on their undergraduate and doctoral program advisory committees, respectively. She has also served on the Provost's Advisory Committee on Interdisciplinary Activities.

In 2018 Chuku organized an international conference at UMBC on the history and legacy of women's roles in the Nigeria-Biafra War. The conference brought renowned scholars and activists from Nigeria,

South Africa, Germany, England, Canada, and the United States to UMBC.

UMBC students have also benefited from the intellectual and cultural opportunities Chuku has cultivated at the University. Chuku revived UMBC's participation in the **Model African Union** and created the annual Taste of Africa, a celebration of Black History Month and African cultural heritage through unique cuisine and culinary traditions.



Model African Union (2020) in front of the Embassy of Liberia. Photo courtesy of Chuku.

More broadly within the University System of Maryland (USM), Chuku also serves on the executive council of the **USM Women's Forum**.



USM Women's Forum 2019 retreat. *Photo courtesy of Natasha Rodriguez.*

## Liptz Lecture

Similar to **previous Liptz Professorship recipients**, Chuku will share her work with the campus community through the Liptz Lecture. The lecture is the culminating event of the professorship, part of the Humanities Forum lecture series hosted by the Dresher Center for the Humanities.

Chuku follows **Jessica Berman**, professor of English and director of the Dresher Center for the Humanities, the 2019 – 2020 Liptz Professor, and **Dan Bailey**, a professor of visual arts who focuses on animation and interactive media, the 2018 – 2019 recipient.

“Dr. Chuku is recognized worldwide as a leader in her field,” shares CAHSS Dean **Scott Casper**. “Her service to UMBC and the national and international research community is wide-ranging and deep. I am delighted that she is this year’s recipient of the Lipitz Professorship.”

*Banner image: Chuku at UMBC. Photo courtesy of Marlayna Demond '11 for UMBC.*

**FacebookTwitterLinkedInShare**