

Angela Davis speaks on need for gender and racial equality

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High rates of incarceration and criminalization of communities affected by poverty and racial discrimination are increasingly common problems in America, social justice activist Angela Davis said during a speech in McAlister Auditorium on the Tulane University uptown campus on Monday (Nov. 18).



Angela Davis, a social justice activist, talks about the meaning of freedom in America during a speech at Tulane University on Nov. 18. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celetano)

[Davis](#) is the author of nine books and has lectured extensively throughout the United States as well as around the globe.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," said Davis, quoting the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Drawing on her own experience of 18 months spent in jail and on trial, Davis focused on the meaning of freedom in today's society.

Davis said that she has joined with other activists to fight against privatized prisons until the U.S. no longer holds 25 percent of the world's prison population.

She recognized landmarks in the fight for equality, mentioning the Congressional Gold Medal recently awarded to the families of the four children who died in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963.

“What I feel about such demonstrations is they tend to act as historical closure,” said Davis.

Davis pushed for recognition of America's problems of gender inequality and racially motivated incarceration and cautioned about society's collective forgetfulness that deflects attention from issues such as lack of education, housing and jobs.

She reminded the audience that black women employed as domestic workers began the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a pivotal event in the civil rights movement in the 1950s. “Social theories that might have been viewed as inalterable came to be viewed as malleable because of actions like this,” she said.

Citizens today can unite to make their voices heard, she said, proving that is possible to learn from seemingly ordinary people who adopted critical stances.

Davis' speech was a [TUCP Direction Presents event](#).

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