



SANKOFA FACT SHEET



“The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.” (Frederick Douglass)

Over the past thirty years California State University, Northridge has gone through drastic changes. The name of the campus has changed along with its design. What was once a predominately white, middle – class school is now one of the most ethnically diverse California campuses. It is safe to say that without the type of radical and urgent action, which was taken on November 4th 1968, this school would not be close to what it is today. The attaining of the Afro-American Studies Department led to the Chicano, Asian-American and Native-American studies’ departments on this campus. Archie Chatman and his team of revolutionaries set the tone and demanded change. Their legacy and the legacy of this department will forever be included in the history of this school, this state, and this country in a time when sitting still could no longer be an option. It was a time when making moves and being “radical” was a way of everyday life and a means of survival. The influence and result of their actions could not have been foreseen, but if success is measured by the difference one makes, the Valley State Black Student Union (BSU) of 1968 was a local and national success. The student revolt on November 4th should never be forgotten. It is a piece of every CSUN minority, and an important part of the Civil Rights movement. The “Valley State 19” went to prison to fight for our freedom and equality. Their contribution to the students on this campus is immeasurable.

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to equip all students with as much knowledge and information about the establishment of the Pan African Studies Department as possible. Through an array of surveys, interviews and factual data we, as a class, have attempted to eradicate myths about the formation of the Pan African Studies Department. Our additional objective is to share with you the minds and hearts of our students, professors and Black student organizations.

Project Findings

- ☪ ***We know that students benefit from the Pan-African Studies Department, but do we know exactly how it was formed?***
Out of the 76 students surveyed, 71% of lower division PAS majors and 51% of upper division PAS majors were unfamiliar with the formation of the department.
- ☪ ***In addition, how many students are informed about November 4th and how it relates to the formation of the Department?***
Our findings indicate that 67% of the upper division PAS majors and 81% of the upper division non-PAS majors had no information about the significance of November 4th as the date the department was formed.
- ☪ ***Do you feel that the Department has lived up to its original objectives?***
Statistics show 41% of the lower division students and 29% of the upper division students felt that the Department has, while 35% of the lower division students and 53% of the upper division students felt that the department had “somewhat” achieved its objectives.
- ☪ ***What knowledge does today’s students have of the BSU movement on campus?***
BSU is the 1st Black organization formed on the Northridge campus but 76% of the lower division students and 45% of the upper division students had no information of the BSU movement on campus. On the bright side 47% of the upper division students had some information of the BSU movement on campus.



MYTHS vs. FACT



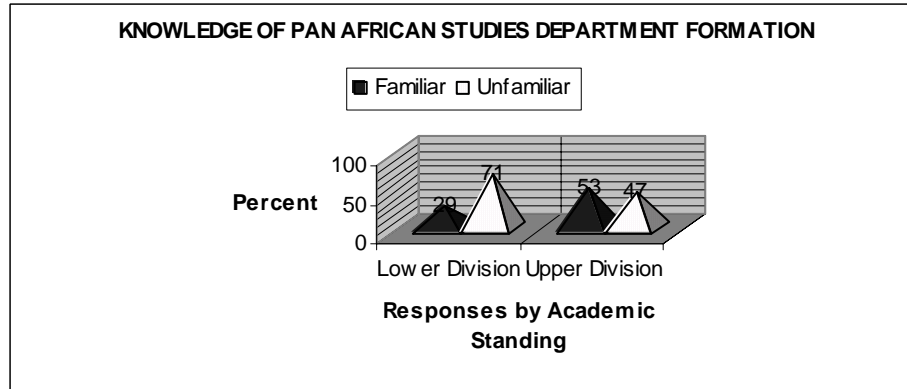
MYTHS:

- ⌚ Black students in 1968 held up the president of Valley State at gun point.
- ⌚ Some black students kidnapped the president and barricaded Sierra Hall until the school president said it was okay to have a Black Studies department.
- ⌚ Some professors wanted to give black people an opportunity to explore their culture and their own roots, so they decided to form this department.
- ⌚ November 4th is when they got the go ahead to make the PAS department recognized by the university.
- ⌚ The University was honored to establish this department on this campus and congratulated the BSU members for their efforts in diversity.

FACT:

The Pan African Studies (PAS) Department was founded by the Black Student Union (BSU) due to racism and unequal educational opportunities at CSUN (formerly San Fernando Valley State College). Students fought, protested and demanded that the President establish the Department. On November 4, 1968, the BSU took over the Administration Building (currently Student Services Building) in the CSUN's President's office, in order to address these inequities and underrepresentation of Black students and faculty. On 1-8-69 and 1-9-69 the BSU, other CSUN student groups, and Black community members held massive demonstrations in the "free speech" area (formerly in front of the Matador Bookstore) demanding that the CSUN administration honor the November 4th agreement. The administration responded with a massive show of force by the Los Angeles Police Department, who were brought on campus to squelch and prevent these mass demonstrations. There were many occasions of excessive police violence and brutality, and 275 students were arrested. Several student activists were charged with felony crimes, and were tried, convicted, and served time in prison. This is the only university in the U.S. that charged Black student activists with felony crimes during the struggle to establish a Black Studies Department.

Survey Questions & Answers



Do you know how the Pan African Studies (PAS) Department was formed?

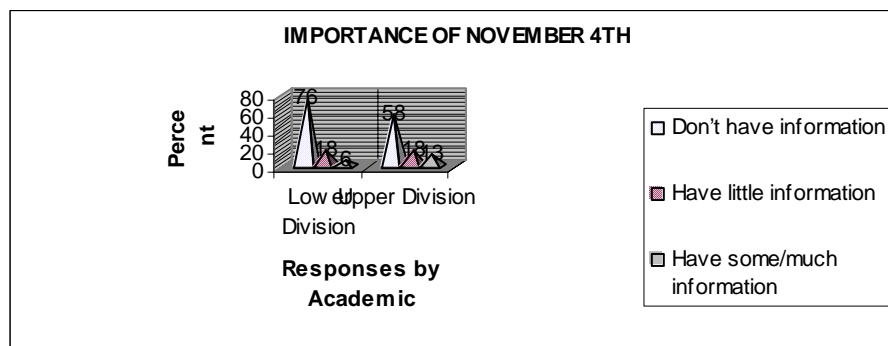
Selected Responses of Students

“College students protested, took over Presidents office to demand a Black Studies department. Some were arrested and beaten.”

“Students took over the administration (building) and demanded the creation of a PAS department.”

Selected Responses of Professors

“Yes, the department was formed primarily out of a lot of anguish, turmoil and pain. Lots of people were hurt and jailed to make the structure work. The administration did not acknowledge the Black students as equal. Basically, the white University had no intentions on giving blacks any power in the process .”



What is November 4th's importance in reference to the founding of the department?

Selected Responses of Students

“Anniversary of the PAS department.”

“It is the day of the sit-in.”

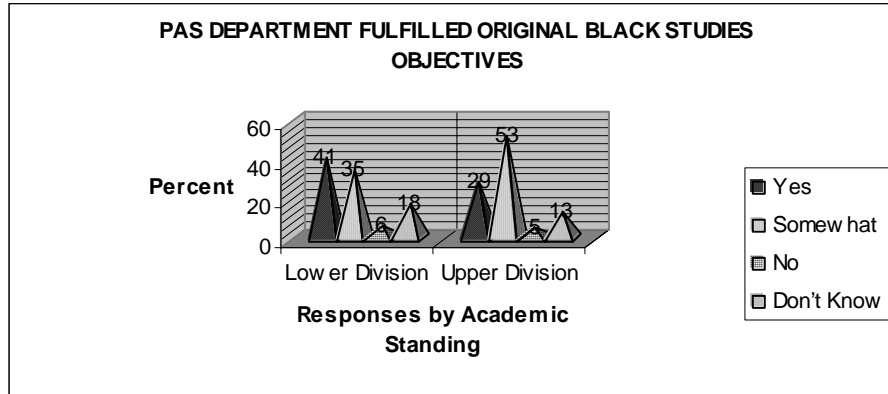
“I have viewed “Storm at Valley State...”

Selected Responses of Professors

“My brother-in-law was one of the protesters. My god-parents were some of the people who hid the students when the police came looking for them.”

It is an annual reminder of those who dared to stand up against oppression. They put their education and life on the line. We have a moral obligation to those who did this...It is a time of reflection, remembrance and education.”

“The students were civil at first with their demands, then they acted out after not getting any response...Blacks are not proactive, but yet are a reactive group. That is why all Black students should know about Nov.4th, so that we are proactive at maintaining the accomplishments that others have set before.”



The early objectives of Black Studies, according to Dr. Maulana Karenga are as follows:

- to teach about the Black experience in the African Diaspora, incorporating an historical and contemporary focus
- to assemble and create a body of knowledge that contributes to intellectual and political emancipation
- to create a body of Black intellectuals dedicated to community service vs. careerism
- to cultivate, maintain and expand a mutually beneficial relationship between the campus and the community
- to establish Black Studies as a legitimate, respected, and permanent discipline

Has the department lived up to the original objectives?

Selected Responses of Students

“The department seems to digress in terms of creating an accurate picture of African Diaspora life. The department should be a mirror of such power, but it’s the opposite.”

“The internal conflict between PAS staff and faculty is apparent. This negativity casts a negative shadow on the department, not to mention that it’s an embarrassment to Black Students. If the PAS faculty is divided, how can we as students come together and fully take on leadership roles when our PAS faculty leaders are leading by poor example?”

“I am thankful for PAS classes because they taught me more than just what is in the book, and I also learned more about my culture.”

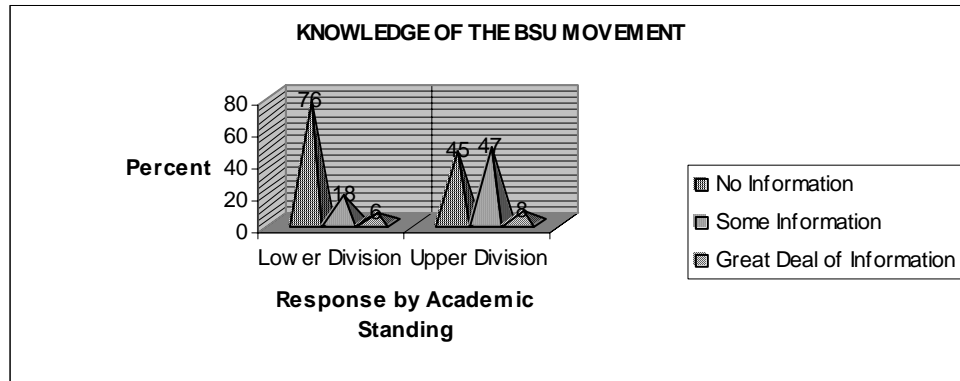
Selected Responses of Professors

“You can never gain 100% of any objectives because time passes with new obstacles and new visions.”

“The department could improve. It is an ongoing progress. It’s the nature of knowledge. Just because you have a college degree doesn’t mean that you don’t have room for improvement...”

“We like to train people to be active in the community, but a lot of them are looking for jobs and regular careers and they may be a PAS major, get a degree, go out and get a job and contribute money...but that is not the true physical activism that was one of Karenga’s original intents.”

“I think they’ve lived up to some of them, but I think that the university structure makes it difficult to live up to all of them. Unfortunately, while Karenga would like us not to focus on our careers, we have to eat. I think, in terms of teaching about the Black experience, we’ve done that very well.”



What knowledge do you have of the Black Student Union (BSU) movement on this campus?

Selected Responses of Students

“BSU formed the department and is the conduit for Black organizations.”

“I think that they have been out of the loop for a long time, but they are really making an effort to strengthen the Black community.”

“BSU has been a strong driving force in the formation of the PAS department and developing a relationship between African-American students and organizations.”

Selected Responses of Professors

“It’s the voice of the young people and the voice of the future and it’s a voice that we better support because I think that we are so comfortable here and we got it so good that we can forget that what took 30 years ago can be gone in 30 seconds.”

“The BSU was the organization that spearheaded the revolt. They were primarily responsible for the changes that took place on this campus. When the department was formed, the BSU was intricate... now it works as an umbrella organization on campus.”

What, if any, contributions have you made to continue awareness of the November 4th events and the BSU movement?

Selected Responses of Students

“What is November 4th?”

“I am a current BSU member and head of the planning committee.”

“By being involved in BSU... we showed the film, ‘Storm at Valley State’ several times.”

Selected Responses of Professors

“I try to encourage students. I am one of the few Black faculty members who actually tries to go to the student events and I encourage the students to go and offer them extra credit for going.”

“We were very energized during 60’s, 70’s and early 80’s. There was a lot of vocalization... We have cleared the way and carved the road but we have stepped aside while everyone else travels it. The struggle has to continue. The power that we have on campus today was through the struggle of young Black students that opened the doors for others, and we have to do the same.”

What has or has not generated more interest in the presence of Black Leadership on campus? Have we overcome?

Selected Responses of Students

“The clubs and organizations are trying to generate more Black leadership on this campus, but we need the support of PAS faculty and staff. We have not overcome.”

“I don’t really know.” “We have overcome nothing and are falling back...”

“Several Black teachers have proven that education has no color lines...Because of their impact I have more interest and a better knowledge of PAS classes and Black empowerment.”

“We as students are making an effort but a lot of us really don’t know about the struggle of the Black community with regard to CSUN.”

“Overcome what? ...the department to what *has not* been generating interest is...a genuine passion for whatever is going on. The people themselves don’t feel inspired or motivated or even made to care unless something directly affects them or entertains them.”

Selected Responses of Professors

“No...we are best prepared on where to go by being clear where we came from. The Sankofa bird represents looking backwards to [go] forward. There is still some very good teaching that goes on in this department. But the question is teaching to what end. Our purpose seems to be unclear anymore...The PAS Department needs to either remember or be reminded of what the proper role is and who the proper clients are...”

“No because the retention rate is so difficult. I mean, don’t we have one of the lowest retention rates of all the minority groups on campus? I am not so sure that the university is focused on recruiting us.”

“Black professors are the problem. They come to teach and then they leave. These actions show that we are regressing, that we are not forming the alliance that we need to make ourselves known and heard on campus...If students saw professors more involved they would be more involved themselves.”

“We have lives...families...we have work to do in order to stay here, we have to publish...and the university doesn’t care whether we engage in community service or not. We have to find time and resources, (and) we are taking away from our individual families. So this idea that we’re supposed to walk in the door and be their parents is crazy...They don’t expect their geography professor to do those kinds of things for them but then they are the ones who receive accolades because they are able to publish.”



“KNOW THYSELF”

CSUN BLACK ORGANIZATIONS SPEAK OUT



Objectives of the CSUN campus Black organizations

- ☪ "Our objective is to help black students learn the aspects of Business, while networking and learning Black culture." *CSUN Black Business Association...2004*
- ☪ "To increase the amount of PAS majors and minors; To broaden the experience of the students who PAS majors and minors; To bridge the gap between students and professors; To be the liaison between students and campus." *Pan African Council...2004*
- ☪ "We are active in scholarships and service within different communities." *Delta sigma Theta...2004*
- ☪ "Our objective is to serve as a conduit between all Black organizations through the PAS department and to create a welcoming environment for Black students on the CSUN campus." *CSUN Black Student Union...2004*

The PAS department influence on the success of Black organizations

- ☪ "The PAS has always been like an umbrella of support. They post flyers and really promote events. It is unknown what our organization would do without the support of the PAS." *Delta Sigma Theta... 2004*
- ☪ "The PAS supports student activism and many of our members are PAS majors." *CSUN Black Business Association... 2004*

Black organizations contributions to Black students opportunity and awareness

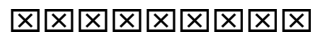
- ☪ "Our organization allows students to learn about future job opportunities and things they can take advantage of. This offer gives students the opportunity to be successful in the business world." *CSUN Black Business Association...2004*
- ☪ "We are an organization that utilizes the resources of the PAS. We are always looking for ways to inform Black students, and promote campus awareness. We emphasize the importance of registering to vote, and we recently led police brutality march. We also want people to know how important it is for students to take Pan African Studies courses. Previous students worked very hard to get the PAS Department." *Delta Sigma Theta...2004*

Organization's relationship with other Black organizations on campus.

- ☰ “Our organization runs the Black House and we are constantly working with the other organizations on campus. We make a concerted effort to work with and support all of the other Black organizations by putting out a weekly listing of events to all organizations via email.” *CSUN Black Student Union...2004*
- ☰ “A lot of the organizations on campus like the NAACP, the BSU and the PAC compete because we have similar goals.” *Pan African Council...2004*
- ☰ “The BSU and the BBA are attempting to bridge the gap between all of the clubs.” *Pan African Council...2004*

Organization's on unresolved campus issues.

- ☰ “ We would like to see 1) improvement in Professor/ Student relationships; 2) Involvement of Black students in non-social events; 3) Recruitment of Black students to promote activism and; 4) Increased recruitment of Black students to the CSUN campus.” *CSUN Black Student Union...2004*
- ☰ “The African American student drop out rate, greater students involvement, improved business education, and African American recruitment by small businesses and large companies.” *Black Business Association*
- ☰ “The African American student dropout rate, greater student's involvement, improved business education, and African American recruitment by small businesses and large companies.” *Black Business Association...2004*
- ☰ “We are working on changing our diploma from African-American Studies to Pan African Studies. We are also working on developing a community with all other Black campus organizations. We would also like to see PAS professors more involved and having a better relationship with the students. I, personally, would like to see more Black students get involved in A.S.” *Pan African Council...2004*
- ☰ I know a lot of the problems come from the lack of awareness that the black students have on this campus (e.g. November 4th is a historical event on our campus that not very many students know about). I mean, professors try to ring their students out to support, but that just isn't enough. It can be so much bigger and greater if more students were informed. That's what the Deltas are trying to do, think of a way to get information out there. *Delta Sigma Theta...2004*



This fact sheet is to inform students, as well as faculty, of the true struggle during the formation of the Pan African Studies Department here at CSUN. The results we have collected showed how many people are misinformed, and how many are actually knowledgeable about this issue. Stay tuned for our *SANKOFA Newsletter* this semester where we examine the PAS Department even further, and address other subjects pertaining to our Black culture here at CSUN and the Pan African world.

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