

Black Student Success Council (BSSC)

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2020

Welcome

- Theresa provided an update on where we are and the need to recalibrate our priorities given the multiple challenges faced over the last year.

BSSC Revised Priorities

- Debra identified three things that the BSSC hopes to accomplish by June 30th. 1. Develop protocol and procedures for conducting focus groups this summer. 2. Get the BSSC website up. Dr. Watkins is checking with Student Affairs IT to see if they can help. 3. Finalize the BSSC branding. Development of the BSSC logo has started.
- Depending on what happens next year with enrollment, we may face financial challenges and have to make some adjustments to our anticipated goals.
- Theresa thanked the group leaders for submitting the information needed to present an annual report to Dr. Watkins and the Provost. Asked group leaders who have not had an opportunity to do so to please send to her and Debra as soon as possible.

Summary of Meeting with VPSA

- Theresa and Debra met with Dr. Watkins and presented the budget proposal.
- Discussed how COVID-19 will impact the budget for the campus as a whole, and how it will affect multiple campus activities and groups.
- Discussed the focus groups, website, getting IT support and the need to work in collaboration with other groups on campus, and to "institutionalize" efforts so they are on-going and systematic.
- Identified two areas of focus. 1. Focus groups and 2. Promotional Material.
Dr. Watkins encouraged us to work with the Office of Student Success with regard to focus groups, overall strategy and budget needs. He also encouraged us to work with the SOAR Dept and develop a strategic alliance with them regarding recruitment efforts.
- Regarding focus groups, we are looking at potentially having five virtual focus groups with 6-8 students each, and recording the interviews on Zoom.
- Need to have a conversation with Melanie Bocanegra, the new AVP for Student Success before we can move forward with focus groups.
- Debra asked for feedback.
- Question: Would the questions asked in the focus groups be overridden by what students are feeling right now, in relation to Covid-19?
- Marcy loved the idea of partnering with the Office of Student Success. Thinks this is a great time to talk to students and ask if they are feeling supported by the university.

- Vicki suggested the need for being intrusive in the lives of our Black students. Discussed the need to touch every Black student so they know we care about them; make sure they know about the upcoming May 1st deadlines for grading and identify and needs they have for food or computer support to help. Students will not necessarily ask for help even if they need it. Suggested doing this before we do focus groups. Vicki also suggested taking notes on student's responses and putting them in CSUNBox.
- Gigi would like a comprehensive list of resources available when speaking with students.
- Theresa has a comprehensive list of resources she can provide.
- Theresa also noted the need to provide students with information on grade changes as well.
- Shiva noted that their staff have been calling freshmen from 2019 and found that the students appreciated receiving a call from them.
- Abram would be happy to help contact students. Noted that many students won't seek help and are not aware of the help that is available. He is willing to come to virtual classrooms to provide more information.
- Theresa discussed the tentative plan to use Canvas for disseminating information to students. Asked Deion for an update. Deion noted that nothing has been done yet, beyond the initial discussion. Debra noted that the Canvas site has to be hosted by a faculty or staff member or a department, program on campus. More discussion needs to take place in this regard.
- Debra asked the group if they would be interested in participating in calling students as Vicki suggested. Members interested in helping to pull together information included Abram, Vicki, Del, Elizabeth G, Theresa, Nyla. Members interested in calling/zooming with students included Allen, Del, Vicki, Lissa, Deion, Nyla, Elizabeth G, Michelle, Shay, Shiva, Gigi, Dawn and Kent.
- Del noted that this is also one way to get our name out there with students.
- Elizabeth suggested getting information on the credit/non-credit issue for students who have those questions.
- Gigi wanted to make sure that information about financial aid is included for students who may have questions about how dropping a class might affect them.
- Theresa answered questions about how submitting a change of grade (CR/NC) request takes place.
- Ryan would like to have graduate students included in the phone calls that are made.
- Lissa would like to have a resource list that we can use to help direct students since she is limited in the advice she is allowed to give out to students.
- Debra asked Shelline about the 22 million from the CARES federal funding we are using to support students. Shelline noted that the CSUs are still meeting to determine how this money is distributed, and what process will be used to help students apply. Money is for all students (undergraduate and graduate, but exclude undocumented students and international students). Shelline also noted that the money is grant money not a loan. More detail will be released as decisions are made. Shelline recommended letting students know that information is forthcoming, and they should be prepared to submit an application if that is the process that has been decided on.

- Theresa made a distinction between the stimulus package and the funding offered for online summer school classes. Discussion is taking place on what students will need to do to apply for money to take summer school courses.
- Shelline noted that it is important to let students know that financial aid funding is available for summer classes. Less than half-time enrollment is acceptable for summer classes.
- Shay mentioned that the Tseng College is being flexible with their payment extensions. Shay will send copy of the email from Elizabeth Adams to Theresa.
- Nyla suggested adding direct contact names to the list of resources for students.
- Elizabeth Riegos-Olmos wanted to stress the need for having an advisor help students who are considering changing grades by May 1st.
- Kandace noted that they are limited because most of the labs for film student are on campus. They have been compiling a list of “ghosted” students in their classes to find out why they are not showing up to Zoom meetings.
- Kent was concerned about today being the last day for students to drop classes. He sent out emails to faculty to remind students about this. Noted that some faculty are changing the content of their courses, making it difficult for students to keep up. Kent suggested that we might need to reach out to the Associate Deans to let them know if a student is struggling with the work that is being assigned in a course.
- Theresa mentioned the need to have some of these discussions concerning course load with students.
- Ryan was concerned about us having advising conversations with students. Would also like to include some upcoming events on the list of resources for students. Suggested emailing students ahead of time to let them know that someone will be reaching out to them from the Black Student Success Council.

BSSC Logo

- Shay provided an update on the logo being worked on by Debra's marketing team. Wanted it to be holistic, invoke a sense of community, belonging and inclusivity. Images are rough sketches. Goal is to have a logo ready by June.
- Shay shared copies of the various logo sketches being designed for discussion.
- Vicki likes the focus on the end goal of graduation. Likes using the word Black. Likes the option that shows a mortarboard with multiple colors.
- Elizabeth G likes the use of BSSC on the mortarboard.
- Kandace also likes the 3rd option with the multi-color mortarboard, but thinks the font needs adjustment.
- Gigi likes the top three options and feels that the mortarboard picture reminds her too much of Black Graduation. Likes the image with the people.
- Kandace asked if we could combine both the concept of the people and the mortarboard into one logo.
- Abram suggested having some of the people in the logo with mortarboard caps and some without.
- Elizabeth G. agrees with the idea of combining both images; people and mortarboard.
- Vicki asked if they could provide us with other color options.

Goals and Priorities 2020-2021

BSSC 2019-20 Annual Report

- Theresa asked the council for input on what they think should be the goals and priorities for the semester, and if we should have a summer meeting.
- Vicki noted that we need to plan on coming back in the fall virtually and helping students to understand that we are here to support them when they come back in the fall, in spite of all the changes to education that are taking place.
- Theresa noted the importance of us preparing for both possibilities (returning to campus and staying virtual in the fall).
- Del suggested doing our outreach sooner rather than later; before May 1st. Also wanted to come back as a group to discuss the responses we received.
- Debra noted the importance of letting the VPs know what Black Students are communicating to them and what they are feeling during this season.
- Del suggested also letting them know about students who have experienced loss or isolation during Covid-19.
- Theresa would like to meet after May 1st and again in the summer per the group's suggestions.
- Elizabeth G asked if the list of resources could be shared as a Google Doc for everyone to provide input.
- Vera Hampton talked about putting together a virtual brochure regarding the various cultural groups on campus. Still working on Black Student Cultural Talks on May 25th on Platform Q.
- Theresa noted that the Black House has a group of virtual events they are hosting, and virtual tutoring being offered through the Africana Studies Writing Center.
- Debra would like information on events happening or services being provided sent to her and Theresa.
- Ryan Mason would like us to have our own communication with students rather than a group email. Would like to see a more specific email directed to them.
- Elizabeth G. noted concern about a lack of information being given to students regarding grades and how their academics are being affected.

Announcements

- Deion mentioned that there is a new BSLC resident and Vice President. Deion is now the A.S. Vice President.
- Debra noted that WISDOM is having an event tonight (sister circle for women). Will provide information on upcoming WISDOM events.
- Vicki mentioned weekly conversation “Under the BlackLight: COVID” (impacts on the Black community) on Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. It is sponsored by the African American Policy Forum.
- Nyla noted that the Career center is gathering information for students regarding telecommuting and career search in this environment.

Adjourn

Links from the Chat Log

Gigi sent <https://www.csun.edu/covid-19/covid-19-information-students>
Shay sent <https://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/changegrading>
Shay sent <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XFFma8TR-R9zfC71yGWgBXOo1AEYk5Z>
Auvria sent <https://www.csun.edu/outreach/resources>
Abram sent <https://www.csun.edu/counseling>