

## Black Student Success Council (BSSC)

### Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2020

#### Welcome

- Theresa White welcomed everyone and introduced the new Black Student Leadership Council President Racquel Holloway (Rocky).

#### Guest Speaker

- Dr. Watkins thanked the Council for its service and acknowledged the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the death of George Floyd. Dr. Watkins discussed the plan for the fall semester in general, and the challenge of building a sense of belonging with students while not being able to physically be with them on campus.
- He expressed hope that we would be able to participate in the conversation happening tomorrow with students regarding the death of George Floyd. He felt it is important for members of the Council to show up and show our support for those who are calling for change. He expects the student body to return to campus with the same spirit of student activism that they are known for.
- The search for a new president for CSUN will resume in September with an announcement of a new president being made in the fall term. Deion Turner (AS Vice President) and Rose Merida (AS President) will both be involved in the search process.
- Regarding enrollment, the incoming freshman class will not be as large as we hoped, but transfer numbers are higher so we should be in alignment with what we expected.
- Debra opened the time up for questions and comments to Dr. Watkins.
- Vicki thanked Dr. Watkins and Dwayne Cantrell for the creation of the BSSC and expressed an expectation that the Council would serve as leaders on our campus with regards to student activism.
- Dr. Watkins briefly discussed prop 209. Noted that the BSSC has visibility with the President and the President's Cabinet that it has never had before.
- Ryan Mason thanked Dr. Watkins.
- Dr. Watkins noted the importance of having the BSSC established and already working on various projects when a new President comes to campus in the fall.
- Marcy had a question about the expectation for tomorrow's forum with President Harrison. Dr. Watkins said that the Council should show up as members of the community who are standing with them in solidarity. He thought it would be great to be able to create a short list of ways CSUN can make a difference around these issues, including the effects of the criminal justice system.
- Gigi had two questions. 1. Beyond our campus have we engaged in a conversation with any other community councils? 2. Does this change what we will look for in a candidate to be our next president? Dr. Watkins answered yes to both questions and

acknowledged that he expects the Trustees to include this issue and COVID-19 in their search for a new president. He made some remarks about the current president's priorities and the hope for a new president.

- Del commented on the *Black Lives Matter* movement and asked if there has been any discussion on cutting funding for CSUN Police, or dismantling that department?
- Dr. Watkins said that conversation is not currently happening. The conversation is centered around the need to provide safety for students and the Cabinet is pleased with our new Chief of Police. The discussion is not about defunding, but about what we need on this campus.
- Theresa thanked Dr. Watkins, and asked that she and Debra remain at the forefront of any conversation on the campus that pertains to Black students, staff and faculty at CSUN.
- Dr. Watkins discussed the importance of being leaders who are willing to change course when a better idea comes along.
- Theresa expressed her appreciation for Dr. Watkins joining us today.

### **Focus Groups & Student Outreach**

- Theresa recapped some of the conversations that took place at the last meeting, including having student outreach take place over the summer, who would participate, and how the process might unfold. She opened conversation up to the Council for comments.
- Everyone agreed to have outreach occur this summer - June & July. Most outreach would be over the phone to approximately 2500 students. What is our outcome for this initial conversation over the summer? People who want to participate in outreach, by making phone calls, include Deion, Shay, Kent, Allen, Ryan, Mechelle, Gigi, Jessica, Aaron, Dawn, and Lissa.
- Still need to develop a script and identify questions to ask.
- Debra noted that the first script was focused around COVID-19 and the Cares Act, so we need to start over. Questions might include: How are you doing? What can CSUN do for you? Are you still coming? Important to let them know that the BSSC exists.
- Shelley Ruelas-Bischoff indicated a desire to hear from students directly and recommended asking how can we help create a community and sense of connection for them in the virtual space?
- Elizabeth Adams asked for a list of the students so she can send a text message to via the chat bot. She suggested sending a text to them to let them know that someone from the BSSC will be calling them. Admissions and Records would actually send out the text message on behalf of the BSSC. All new students would be included in the chat bot.
- Theresa recommended using an app named jabber to facilitate the calls, so we can use our cell phones without giving out our personal numbers.
- Theresa received the list of Black students from IR and asked how people thought that list should be distributed. List is currently sorted by colleges. Teiana would like to see if the list can be coded by student athletes? Mechelle noted the importance of letting students know that they are part of a larger community. Gigi clarified that the list does not include incoming students only current students. Vera noted that SOAR is working on messaging for incoming students. SOAR can add a message from BSSC if desired. Theresa would like to follow up with Vera on this possibility.

- Question from Debra. Is anyone willing to keep the ball moving on the summer student outreach project? Vicki and Ryan volunteered to work together to help facilitate the process and to follow up with BSSC members.
- Shelley had a question about having staff members on the Student Life Team assist with calls, even though they are not on the BSSC? Debra acknowledged that we may need extra help to get through the large number of calls needed. Mechelle noted that it would be potentially 125 calls a week and that more people would be needed.
- Ryan suggested creating a webinar to help recruit and train potential callers.
- Vicki noted that the Black Faculty and Staff Organization and Academic Advisors may be able to identify people who can help.
- Tiffany suggested reaching out to Black Student Leaders to help. Rocky also offered to help.
- Theresa asked for comments regarding the questions to be asked during the student outreach phone calls. More to follow on this.
- Vicki and Ryan to meet tomorrow to start reviewing.
- Vera suggested using CSUNBox to hold the script and log of calls being made.
- Vera provided a quick update on the Black Cultural Talk that took place on May 27th. They had 75 participants. A brochure is still being worked on.
- Theresa asked for dates to set as goals: Monday at 5pm was set for potential questions to be sent to Vicki and Ryan.
- Elizabeth Riegos noted that EOP might be able to offer some support. Suggested we check with Shiva.
- Elizabeth Adams asked for the text message and list of students, as we finalize the timeline. She will need a little lead time to set it up.
- Theresa suggested starting the phone call campaign on June 15th. Vicki and Ryan will put together a timeline and send it to Debra and Theresa.

### **BSSC Logo and Website**

- Shay shared the logo with the Council.
- Michelle had a concern about the letters "BSSC", which are located across the people image.
- Kandace asked if there was a shorter/abbreviated version that could be used. Debra noted that the expectation was to use the entire logo. Kandace was concerned about people being able to alter the logo. Debra suggested moving the word "BLACK" up slightly.
- Debra is still looking at who will do the website. The goal is to have it done before school starts.

### **Announcements**

- Gigi congratulated Nyla on her appointment as the administrator in charge at the Career Center.
- Deion is part of the Presidential Search Committee.
- Vicki said Monday, June 8th at 8:30pm Deion will be inaugurated at Associated Students.

### **Adjourn**

