

Black Student Success Council (BSSC)

Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2021

Welcome

- Theresa and Debra welcomed everyone to the Black Student Success Council (BSSC) meeting and introduced Pero Akinbohun, the Black Student Success Initiatives Coordinator at the USU; Brianne Posey, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology and Justice Studies in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences; Jennie Skillern, BSSC Graduate Student Assistant and Dominique Moye, Black House Director.
- Congratulations were extended to Dr. Mechelle Best who is the new Dean of the College of Health and Human Development and to Takiya Moore on the success of the recent Technology Engagement Conference.

BSSC 2021-22 Goals/Objectives Voting Results & Action Steps

- Theresa provided a brief summary of the last meeting, including a survey that was taken by each member of the Council who was present, to finalize the BSSC top goals and objectives for the 2021-22 year.
- The survey results from the October meeting in order of priority were as follows:
 1. CSU: Equity Plan: GI 2025 Graduation Initiative, Reducing Equity Gaps & High DFU Rates
 2. Intentional Focus on FTF and FTT Student Success and Community Building
 3. BSSC Visibility, Outreach & Student Connections
 4. Elevate Student Voices – Create Narratives of Black Student Life (Emphasize Success Stories)
 5. Impact of University 10 – Point Action Plan Examine University DEI Structures
 6. Leverage BSSC Member Strengths: Assessing Outcomes, Advocacy & Action Plans
- Theresa and Debra asked everyone to indicate (in the chat) which projects (based on items 1-6 above) that they would be interested in working on, and also if they would be interested in serving as the convener of the respective group.
- The final results were as follows:

Group Number	Council Members Interested
1. CSU: Equity Plan: GI 2025 Graduation Initiative, Reducing Equity Gaps & High DFU Rates	Dominique Moye (convener) Boris Ricks Elizabeth Adams Kent Baxter Janet Oh Mechelle Best Rashawn Green Theresa White
2. Intentional Focus on FTF and FTT Student Success and Community Building	Vera Hampton (convener) Elizabeth Riegos Shelline Warren Brianne Posey Mechelle Best Ashley Talley Rashawn Green Debra Hammond Gigi McGuire April Taylor
3. BSSC Visibility, Outreach & Student Connections	Del Williams (convener) Pero Akinbohun Abram Milton Sandy Darden Ashley Talley Nyla Dalferes

<p>4. Elevate Student Voices – Create Narratives of Black Student Life (Emphasize Success Stories)</p>	<p>Pero Akinbohun (co-convener)</p> <p>Theresa White (co-convener)</p> <p>Deion Turner</p> <p>Vicki Allen</p> <p>Shiva Parsa</p> <p>Natalie Mason-Kinsey</p> <p>Vera Hampton</p> <p>Jade Huell</p> <p>Brianne Posey</p>
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Student Voices

- Deion announced that he is serving as the interim Black Student Leadership President for the remainder of this semester. Friendsgiving Week has been canceled this year and replaced with a Friendsgiving Brunch on Friday, November 19th at 11:30am at the Black House.
- Ashley noted that students are talking about the upcoming spring semester, including the possibility of an in-person graduation and protocols for face-to-face classes. Theresa asked about students’ feelings and concerns regarding graduation and the repopulation during the spring semester, in general. Ashley responded that students are split between being excited about coming back to in-person classes, and worried about the safety protocols that will be in place, given current concerns about COVID-19. Some students are planning to return to classes, but around half of the students Ashley is in contact with are still planning to continue online. Deion added that students are concerned about what the work/life balance will be like, and if the campus will still support them in the same way when the campus is fully reopened. He also noted that some students are wondering if they should transfer to another CSU campus since some campuses are already fully reopened.
- Theresa asked if students receive the notices that go out concerning COVID-19 exposure in particular buildings. Elizabeth confirmed that students do not receive those notices unless they are student employees or were defined by Environmental Health and Safety as a close contact. They also don't generally receive them due to the difficulty of tracking who was in a particular building at any given time. The exception would be Student Housing, or if you are a student assistant working in a particular building where exposure took place. Elizabeth

added that, by and large those notices indicate if a student who tested positive, was enrolled in a class, and attended the class on a particular day. The likelihood of people in that building being exposed to that student is very small.

Announcements

- Natalie announced that 12 recipients were awarded the Diversity, Equity and Innovation Grant this year, including:
 - Dr. Helen Heinrich from Information Technology
 - Dr. Mirna Sawyer from the College of Health and Human Development
 - Dr. Priya Ganguli from the College of Science and Math
 - Dr. Martha Escobar from Chicano/a Studies
 - Vera Hampton and Gigi McGuire from Student Outreach and Recruitment
 - Dr. Theresa White from Africana Studies
 - Dr. Nicole Blalock from American Indian Studies
 - Dr. Yi Ding in the University Library
 - Dr. Will Garrow and Dr. Flavia Fleischer in Deaf Studies
 - Dr. Freddie Sanchez from the University Student Union
 - Dr. Allen Lipscomb from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Dr. Margeaux Gamboa-Wong from the College of Humanities
- Full details will be released, along with the official announcement on the Diversity, Equity and Innovation Grant website.
- Natalie also announced that the grant received by Dr. Theresa White, *Bridge to the Future(B2F) Black Scholars Matter (BSM)* will be added as a permanent budget line item in the Provost's Office.
- Dominique Moye asked if anyone was interested in being part of the Black History Month Committee to please let her know. The meeting will be on December 9th at 2:00.
- Vicki announced that they are currently recruiting for the Newman Civic Fellow Award. The deadline is January 8, 2022.

Guest Speaker, Provost Mary Beth Walker

- Provost Walker joined the meeting and greeted the Council.
- She announced three endeavors happening on campus. The first involves the new faculty recruiting and hiring practices that are being rolled out across campus, scheduled for implementation this year. The second endeavor is to take a look our retention policies and identify the best practices for retaining diverse faculty. The third endeavor involves bringing in a more diverse faculty into a more inclusive campus with improved retention policies and practices.
- Provost Walker also noted that the President announced that we would begin a conversation on the Roadmap to the Future process with all our stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff. The Steering Committee will be facilitating conversations across the campus that will lead to the creation of the Roadmap.

Right now, the group is discussing what needs to be considered and included. Then the group will check with various groups on campus to make sure we are doing it right. The group will move into an engagement phase, and finally it will be synthesized down to three to five high level priorities for the campus.

- She also mentioned that the campus will have a robust communication plan in place. Students have been providing good ideas on how we can improve our communication to them and others on the campus.
- Provost Walker acknowledged the importance of the work the BSSC is doing and then she offered to answer questions from the BSSC.
- Vicki asked about the hiring of faculty and the training that will be provided around that process. Provost Walker said that every member of a search committee will be undergoing training through Barrett Morris' office in the Dept of Equity and Diversity. She added that she would like to see more regarding the practice of reaching out to specific groups when recruiting candidates.
- Gigi expressed concern that the training being required by members of a search committee should also be provided to the Associate Deans and Deans of the colleges. She noted the importance of providing inclusive training from the top down.
- Takiya asked when we are going to see the same intentionality toward recruiting Black students, as we see toward recruiting Hispanic Students? Provost Walker responded that we need to evaluate what it means to be a minority serving institution, and look for ways to serve all of our underrepresented students with intention.
- Dominique asked the Provost about the type of retention practices they are planning to implement for faculty and staff of color. Provost Walker noted that one thing being talked about is the possibility of providing mentoring programs for new faculty and staff members.
- Theresa concluded our time with the Provost by noting the importance of the relationship we have with her on campus and how important it is for the BSSC to share what we are doing with her on a regular basis.

Guest Speakers, Dr. Janet Oh and Nathan Lieng

- Janet Oh and Nathan Lieng introduced themselves to the Council and presented a presentation on Black Student Success Data and CSUN Dashboards.
- Janet provided an overview of the current dashboards on the CSUN Counts webpage and showed the Council how they could filter the data to see the downward trends in the number of Black students enrolling and graduating from particular colleges. Janet also noted that final enrollment numbers for fall 2021 should be updated soon.
- Nathan provided a brief presentation on the aggregated data for the Black student population at CSUN that he and Janet Oh were able to obtain. Nathan discussed the difficulty of capturing data for every Black student due to the fact

that students self-identify when it comes to ethnicity, and the system may not always categorize them as Black or African American based on their selected choices. At the moment the CSU only provides four options for detailed ethnicity/national origin for those who identify as Black/African American. These include African-American, Black, Haitian, and Other African/Black.

- Nathan was able to pull data, which included the following:
 - 59.5% of students who identified as Black/African American are First-Generation students.
 - 71% of Black/African American students are eligible for Pell grants.
 - Tier 2 First Time Freshmen students who identify as Black/African American appear to have a slightly higher first year GPA 2.52 than their Tier 1 counterparts at 2.26.
 - Tier 2 First Time Freshmen students who identify as Black/African American appear less likely to return to a third semester at CSUN compared to their Tier 1 counterparts.
 - Among First Time Transfer students who identify as Black/African American the first year GPA for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 students doesn't show much difference because transfer students tend to perform better academically than First Time Freshmen.
 - Third semester retention rates for First Time Transfer students who identify as Black/African American show that Tier 2 students had slightly higher retention rates at 18.4% than Tier 1 students at 17.5%.
- The question that needs to be addressed is, “who do we include as part of the Black student population when we are pulling data?” There may be a higher number of Black students at CSUN than we are aware of due to the way we count students who identify as multiracial Black students. The majority of multiracial Black students (47.08%) self-identify as two or more races. Janet suggested that when pulling data, we might want to include students who noted “Black” identity as one of their identities even if their preferred identity is multi-racial.
- Theresa added that the percentage of Black students on campus plays a big role in the decision making and practices for students. When Black students hear that Black students only represent 4.5% out of 40,000 students at CSUN, many students don't get excited about those numbers and [question the commitment to diversity on CSUN's campus]. The Council needs to have more discussion and think about how those numbers are presented, and where they're presented. I think it's an important task for us to take up.
- Theresa thanked Janet and Nathan for sharing this information and invited the Council to please think about, and share any ideas they might have on what should be included in the BSSC databases being created for the website.

Adjourn