

## **Black Student Success Council (BSSC)**

Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2020

### **Welcome**

- Theresa and Debra welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the agenda for the day.

### **Leveraging Strengths: Black Students & Technology**

- Takiya Moore gave a presentation on Black students and instructional technology.
- Takiya wished to make it clear before beginning her presentation that IT doesn't track data by demographics at this point, so she can't tell us, specifically about students of African descent. What she can do is focus on high impact practices which are documented to be more advantageous for students of color; particularly Black students.
- The presentation can be viewed at [https://mysunemail-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/takiya\\_moore\\_csun\\_edu/EZ3kNe7w--xOm5OTQ8vc2x4BsmYGw2IyOgxok7CcQHk1g?e=YRKVZI](https://mysunemail-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/takiya_moore_csun_edu/EZ3kNe7w--xOm5OTQ8vc2x4BsmYGw2IyOgxok7CcQHk1g?e=YRKVZI)
- 2020 survey on technology from Educause given to students of color in response to COVID-19 shows the following:
  - A nudge for usefulness has been documented and has been very helpful for students during this time. This means sending an encouraging message to students, for example through Canvas, is going to benefit students in their performance in a course. Around 75% of students said this is a beneficial practice for them.
  - One of the problems students are having is getting access to Wi-Fi. This includes students on cell phones using up all their data in their personal data plans if they are connecting through a personal hotspot. Some of the recommendations to help students conserve data include turning off cameras while in Zoom sessions, and not using virtual backgrounds.
  - 85% of students are not reporting any indication of being harassed in online environments. However, the number of African American students who are reporting harassment in online spaces is 17% higher than their white counterparts. It is similar for Hispanic students as well. One of the technologies that has been rolled out to campus where this might be occurring is Pronto, which allows direct messaging to students. She stressed making sure that the environment you're sending your students to is supportive, where they are not facing discriminatory actions or harassment, is key.
- A CSUN Survey conducted last spring regarding student access to technology indicated the following:
  - 91% of our students have access to a laptop computer, which is higher than the national average.
  - 58% of them are using mobile devices for accessing their CSUN related work. It is recommended that if you're going to deploy something in your class, you should make sure that it works on mobile devices.
  - Students are reporting that the biggest difficulty with the learning process is the instructor discomfort, or lack of familiarity with required technologies or

applications. CSUN IT offers trainings every week, in addition to one-on-one appointments.

- Theresa asked about other examples of digital tools for face-to-face collaboration, Takiya recommended Pronto, Zoom, MS Teams, Google Suite, Canvas Studio, Adobe Spark, and Portfolium.
- Resources for students include:
  - The device loaner program which provides laptops, iPads, hotspots, webcams and headsets.
  - The keep learning website
  - A course in Canvas called *Becoming an Effective Online Learner*
  - Several student technology tutorials.
- Theresa asked about the participation rate in the *Becoming an Effective Online Learner* course offered in Canvas. Takiya responded that all students have been provided information about this class in their profile.
- Theresa asked how students are made aware of the keep learning website. Takiya responded that the information was provided to students last spring and also went out in the New Student Orientation over the summer. The information is also linked on the CSUN as One webpage and in the *Becoming an Effective Online Learner* course.
- Theresa asked if we have analytics to find out if students are actually using it. Takiya responded that we haven't been tracking it, but the videos from the site have more than 16,000 views.
- Resources for Faculty include:
  - Lecture Capture in a Bag for faculty
  - Keep Teaching website
  - Canvas Course Template
  - Software Solutions for Teaching and Interaction
  - Faculty Professional Development
    - Spring 166 workshops (1,456 completions)
    - Summer 2020 15 synchronous intensives (784 completions)
    - Summer 2020 asynchronous intensive (289 completions)
    - Spring/Summer CO cohorts (159 completions)
    - 2,691 faculty professional development completions March-September
- Debra asked about feedback they're getting from students who say faculty have refused to allow students to show them how to use some of the technology. It seems like some of the faculty are resistant to learning. Takiya noted that it is a steep learning curb for some of the faculty and requires a lot of work for them to convert their courses to facilitate online learning in such a short time. The work loads have increased and many faculty members don't feel appreciated.
- Debra asked about student devices that are overheating and that students requested fans for their computers. Takiya responded that if a student was experiencing this, they would need to get one of the laptop loners provided by the university. Takiya noted that while we don't have loners available at the time it is recommended that the student still apply for one so that IT is aware of the need. Note: IT still has loaners available
- Kandace also recommended that a student check with their college for available laptops.
- Ryan recommended reaching out to the graduation retention specialist for the college to help secure resources that the college may have.
- Theresa asked Takiya how they determine how the number of available loners. Takiya responded that the best advice is that students submit their request, whether we have laptops or not, so they're in our queue for students who need them.
- New instructional technologies available to all faculty include:
  - Panopto - Saves Zoom videos in the cloud.
  - Canvas Studio - Allows you create interactive videos. 5 minute videos should be the goal.
  - GoReact - Allows you to add a video response to a video and search a video.

- Pronto - Direct messaging technology.
- H5P - Allows more interactivity. Create remediation activities.
- Hypothesis - writing support.
- Equatio - STEM related courses.
- Otter.ai - Captioning.
- MSTeams - A social platform.
- Labster - Allows students in sciences and labs components to do their work.
- Recommendations for high impact practices include:
  - First-Year Seminars, such as the development of a Black Male student focused University 100 course.
  - Use of Pronto to develop curricular and cocurricular interactions amongst students.
  - Use MS Teams to simulate/formulate an online learning community in the virtual environment.
  - Helping students with writing-intensive courses by using Turnitin to provide feedback, Grammarly to improve quality of writing, and Voice Thread to also provide targeted feedback.
  - Create learning communities around shared things that students are interested in.
- Teiana made the comment that it would be helpful for advisors and retention specialists to also be trained, since several students come to [advisors] to figure out resources for classes and also how to utilize those resources.
- Takiya noted that anyone on campus is welcome to come to any of the trainings that are posted on the IT website.
- Takiya also recommended Adobe Spark as a free resource to anyone with an edu email, as it helps those with little experience easily create webpages, flyers, etc.

### **Student Voices**

- Olani provided the following update regarding upcoming activities:
  - This week is *Friends Giving Week*.
  - Today at 6:00pm is RBC Black Jeopardy.
  - Tomorrow is the MPH Thanksgiving cookoff at 5:00pm.
  - Thursday is virtual game night between the Black Student Leadership Council (BSLC) and CSUN Athletics, featuring a game called *Among Us*.
  - The Black Student Leadership Council Turkey Drive is on Friday the 20th from 11:00am to 12:00pm for families and students in need.
- The Black Student Union has been curating a study playlist of music for students.
- Elizabeth Gutierrez noted that the email looking for Black Matadors to participate in focus groups is continuing to go out.

### **Leveraging Our Strengths: Black Students and Representation**

#### **College of Humanities**

- Kent Baxter presented information from the College of Humanities.
- For the last few years the number of African American students majoring in the College of Humanities has been somewhat consistent between Fall 2010 and Fall 2020. There was a sharp drop off in Fall 2014 due to impaction, or the way the data was collected based on how students self-identified.
- The largest number of African American students are enrolled in English and Liberal Studies majors.
- Ethnic studies majors do not have many African American students enrolled in them. Note: Africana Studies is not in this college.
- Theresa asked about obtaining data on the percentage of African American students in each major. Kent responded that he did not have that information at this time.

- Theresa asked if, in terms of the ethnic studies departments, this data reflected students who opted to double major. Kent noted that he added the double majors into his report.
- Data for the number of African American students minoring in the College of Humanities majors indicate that most students are enrolled in English.
- Spring 2014 indicated an increase in students enrolled in minors.
- General conclusions about the data include:
  - Student numbers are reflective of the University as a whole. Need to recruit more students from outside of CSUN.
  - Numbers declined significantly in 2014 because of impaction and/or changes in criteria on application forms.
  - Need to reach more potential CSUN students (in addition to recruiting those already on campus).
  - English and Liberal Studies have been consistently the most popular majors and minors.
  - Need additional data on how many African American students start in COH and change colleges or leave CSUN. What specific options are the most popular? What does the data look like for preferred race categories?
- Recruitment Initiatives include:
  - Connecting with Student Outreach and Recruitment to better market the College of Humanities.
  - Creating connections with high schools that have a humanities-based program and have large populations of students of African descent (Hamilton High School, Cleveland Charter High School).
  - Creating connections with community colleges that have large populations of students of African descent (Antelope Valley College, Pierce College).
  - Working with administration and faculty at high schools and community colleges to create a shared culture for students interested in the humanities (in particular, creative writing, civic and community engagement, sustainability, and queer studies).
- Retention Initiatives include:
  - Continuing student success initiatives (in particular, outreach to students who are struggling, or do not attend class).
  - Continuing to promote professional development for faculty that highlights anti-racist pedagogy and culturally responsive and equity-minded practices.
  - Highlighting clubs and initiatives to create a sense of community for students of African descent (in particular for creative writers and potential teachers).
  - Exploring more effective ways to communicate with students (about activities, events, and resources).
  - Promoting a resource site with scholarship opportunities for students of African descent.
- Theresa asked if there was a way to have a more collaborative approach to student outreach?
- Vera responded that if anyone wants to reach out to specific students to please contact her office so they can assist with that effort.

### **Mike Curb College**

- Kandace and Jade presented information on the students of African descent in the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication.
- Fall 2020 student enrollment for the Mike Curb College was 4,920, of which 6.2% (305) of those students identified as Black. This enrollment number represents an 8% decline since 2014 (377).
- 50% decrease in Black students majoring in Journalism since 2014. This is possibly due to the writing component.
- Low number of students enrolled in Art and Theatre.

- Continuation rates for Black students in AMC for Fall 2018 was 67%.
- FTF Fall 2014 cohort graduation rate was 54% (similar to University rate).
- FTT Fall 2014 cohort was 70.4%.
- As we look at the numbers the biggest issue is recruitment rather than retention.
- Currently the rate of Black faculty members is around 5.3%.
- Black faculty growth in both areas (tenure track and lecturer populations) has only seen a 1% increase in over four years.
- There are only 5 full time faculty members that identify as African American/Black.
- Things we can do in response include:
  - There are systemic and process implications of shifting hiring inequities.
  - Sathy, Hogan and Sims (2020) suggest that since the U.S. professoriate is majority white, some faculty members may not recognize the power and privilege they hold to dismantle educational inequities.
  - Departments and institutions have even greater power to enact change than individuals through policy and incentives, and more importantly action.
  - Young (2020) argues that when students see themselves reflected in the campus makeup, they are often encouraged to reach for higher standards of performance which can positively impact their education and improve retention rates.
  - The college will need to seek to engage and additionally support guest lecturers for intimate workshops, where applicable, with college funds.
- Jade discussed reasons for low enrollment among Black students including:
- Cultural factors
  - Perception - Parents want to know, "What can you do with your degree?"
  - Reality - Understanding what careers are available.
- Economic factors
  - Access to co-curricular or extracurricular arts training.
  - Access to art materials and development.
- K-12 education
  - Funding structures - Where does the funding go? Math and Science is a big focus.
  - Incentives
  - Recruitment
- Students in their own words were asked what are barriers to Black student success in MCCAMC? What would you say does/could help Black students succeed in our college?
  - "Lack of representation in the faculty."
  - "Black students deserve Black teachers."
  - "Most of the professors need to decolonize their syllabi."
  - "I shouldn't have to take a class in Black Studies Dept. in order to read Black writers and theorists. And it's a shame that I have to hunt down Black writers in my field on my own time."
  - "The barriers that Black students face have been built long before they step foot in college. The true barrier they must face is recognizing that they are not the problem but the world is, that they must change the world and not themselves."
  - Black students need "communal support and acknowledgment of the importance of black student success from all faculty and disciplines in our college."
  - Black students should keep in mind "Many people you currently know may not relate to you as well as your conversation and intellect expand."
  - Black student should be empowered by "Positioning yourself where the policies, legislation and enforcement are."
- Black Student Success lessons from MCCAMC include:
  - Representation matters. Are the students able to see themselves when they go into the classroom?
  - Ethnic Studies should not be the only place students encounter diverse course content.

- All areas of the college need to commit to dynamic change in regards to anti-blackness (syllabi, course offerings, research topic areas, etc.)
- Students need supportive networks that extend beyond CSUN.
- Internships, mentorships, and community engagement around social justice work empowers Black students.
- Emphasis on structures of inequality rather than student output.
- Kandace noted that we do spend a lot of time trying to change the system, but it's difficult to change a system that doesn't want to be changed. She noted that we also need to spend more time teaching students how to navigate the system they're in, while trying to dismantle the other systemic issues.

## **College of Engineering**

- Dezell gave a presentation on Black student underrepresentation in the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS).
- Black student representation in the college is as follows:
  - Total Fall 2020 student enrollment was 4,876.
  - 2.9% (141) students identify as Black/African American.
  - 22% (31) identify as female and 45% (110) identify as male.
  - 5 females and 3 males in CECS graduate programs.
  - Since 2014, Black student enrollment has increased from 104 to 141, representing a 35% increase over 6 years.
  - CECS majors with the highest percentage of Black students are Computer Science (50%) and Mechanical Engineering (32%). Computer Science grew from 38% to 50% in Fall 2017.
- CSUN continuation rates for Black students in CECS for Fall 2018 was 65%.
- First Time Freshmen Fall 2014 cohort graduation rate was 28%, significantly lower than the University rate.
- Black faculty representation in the college is as follows:
  - Fall 2020 faculty in CECS is 160, of which only 4 (2.5%) identify as Black/African American.
  - All 4 Black faculty identify as male lecturers, and do not hold a tenured or tenure-track position.
  - Black Faculty in CECS has seen a 0% change in growth or decline in 7 years.
  - There is an extreme lack of Black faculty recruitment, hiring, and/or advancement.
- The primary Black student organization in CECS is the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).
  - The NSBE is a national student and professional based organization. Their mission is "to increase the number of culturally responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community."
  - Of the 141 Black students, only 50 are registered members via MataSync.
- Past Activities and Achievement of the NSBE include:
  - Outreach and recruitment events (high schools and community colleges).
  - Provide engineering workshops for current CECS students.
  - 10 members attend annual regional/national conferences with partial CECS funding.
  - Bi-monthly meetings (professionals, Dean of CECS, etc.).
- Future goals of the NSBE include:
  - Increase outreach to local high schools.
  - Provide fundamentals of coding workshop.
  - Request sponsorships from local companies.
  - Start NSBE mentorship foundation to mentor freshmen on quick path to graduating.
- Challenges of Black students in CECS include:

- Black students are underrepresented.
  - This is nothing new. According to the American Society for Engineering Education, students of African-descent only received 4.0% of engineering and computer science degrees awarded in 2018, down from 5.0% in 2008.
  - Black women are pursuing engineering degrees three times less often than their male counterparts. (Slaughter et al, 2015)
- Systemic factors that contribute to Black underrepresentation include:
  - Alienation and lack of belonging.
  - Lack of role models and Black faculty (shared identity).
  - Racism, sexism, and microaggressions.
  - Stereotype threat.
- In student's own words, the following are some of the barriers to Black student success in CECS:
  - "CSUN does not hire any Black faculty that represent the students who go to this campus and engineering is probably the worst, if you ask me. I've never seen a Black teacher or really any professionals in this college and I've been here for five years."
  - "Faculty approach you with this negative (deficit), automatic approach where my Blackness is seen as a weakness and most of the time, I'm seen as a waste of their time."
  - "I feel we're constantly being overlooked and not listened to and it's like (faculty and administration) don't care."
  - "CECS needs to do a better job of presenting to their students what a Black Engineer looks like. They bring in the same type of people from industry to inspire us, yet none of them are ever, ever Black!"
  - "There is no place within CECS where I feel welcome, or seen as academically smart. It's also the CSUN campus as well. If you're Black, you're mostly on your own."
  - "As a Black woman in CECS, you're just a creature from another planet."
  - "I see all these events but none of them are ever for Black students who look like me. NSBE is seen as a joke and no one really takes us seriously."
  - "Where are the Black mentors and Black mentorship opportunities in my college? I don't think it's ever existed."
- Recommendations for CECS include:
  - Invest in NSBE: Increase funding and support for outreach, workshops, and safe spaces for Black students to develop a sense of belonging.
  - Partner with Student Outreach & Recruitment: Increase marketing and recruitment strategies to attract more Black students & connect with local community college CECS programs.
  - Academic Advising Strategies: Enhance the academic advising strategies for Black students (advisors & faculty advisors) and use EAB to help track student performance, utilize proactive strategies.
  - Foster understanding: Develop a culture of understanding and valuing ethnic differences in the CECS faculty, staff and students. Provide diversity and inclusion training, Black guest lectures, or small group discussions where students can share their cultural experiences in CECS.
  - Anti-Blackness: CECS needs to reevaluate their approaches and make a complete shift from their anti-black practices (outreach and recruitment of students and faculty, course offerings, etc.).
- Gigi made a comment that there has been a decline in NSBE participation since the time she graduated. The change in leadership and Prop 209 had a negative impact because we used to go out and recruit from calculus classes and chemistry classes, look for black and brown faces who were already in the math or science path, and who would be eligible for engineering. She also noted that there are a lot of alumni from that college who live in

the valley and work in that field who would love to connect with students and get/share information about NSBE.

- Shiva noted that she has been very involved with the EOP satellite in that college and can say that the new Dean is very aware of the situation and the problems, and they know they have to make a change, but the changes are not going to be seen right away.

### **BSSC Focus Groups**

- Michelle Best and Jessica Fred discussed how we were going to move forward with focus groups. Approximately 93 students have signed up, however those 93 students haven't all showed up. We've been running focus groups since last Tuesday and will continue until the end of this week. We are running 12 focus groups and so far, we have had 34 students in those groups and at least 30 students signed up for the next four days. We really need to push that number higher because the turnout rate is about 50%. Realistically, they expect to end up with about 50 participants or so, but if could reach out to people, we know that could help increase participation.
- Students have been emailing to say thanks for the opportunity.
- At least 10 students have signed up for one of the potential in-depth interviews.
- We want to encourage as many students to participate as possible.

### **Announcements**

- Black Alumni Association will be doing an event on Dec 18th 7-9pm. Proceeds go to the scholarship fund.
- Black History Month is coming in February. Please contact Theresa if you're interested in being on a committee to help coordinate things with the Africana Studies Department and campus constituencies.

### **Adjourn**