

Black Student Success Council (BSSC)

Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2020

Welcome

- Theresa opened the meeting and introduced two new student leaders who have joined the Council, Racquel “Rocky” Holloway, President of the Black Student Leadership Council (BSLC), Ebony Martin, Black House Coordinator and Organizer for BLM Northridge, along with Kenny Pineda, the Administrative Support Assistant in Africana Studies, who is helping to facilitate zoom.
- Theresa asked that we take a moment to pause in remembrance of House Representative John Lewis, who passed this last week. Mechelle Best also acknowledged the passing of C.T. Vivian and Vicki acknowledged civil rights leader, Emma Sanders.
- Debra acknowledged and introduced Teiana Jones, who recently returned to the Council.

Website Update

- Shay Briggs provided an update and walkthrough of the new BSSC website, to be located at www.csun.edu/bssc.
- One suggestion Shay received was using the homepage to highlight current news on what is happening in the community, in and around CSUN.
- A Council member suggested adding student highlights and achievements.
- Rocky asked if there would be a section for Black Clubs and Orgs? Shay explained where those would be located.
- Mechelle suggested placing the "Who We Are" section at the top of the navigation bar. Shay noted that it will most likely be located where the Vision section is currently located and would be renamed.
- Teiana asked about the possibility of including information on local businesses that support Black students. Theresa and Debra recommended that the Council take some time to think about this suggestion and bring it back for further discussion.

- Ryan noted that the newsletter produced by the Black Student Leadership Council (BSLC) mentions local Black businesses already and that we might direct students there. Ryan also asked if there was any talk of moving the CSUN logo to the side of the BSSC logo so it doesn't appear so long, or if a version of the BSSC logo without the CSUN portion would be available. Shay indicated that we don't have a version of the logo without the CSUN portion and Theresa confirmed that we want the CSUN portion included, but we could discuss options.
- Deion suggested including a hyperlink to a page about the Black Student Leadership Council's clubs and organizations, as well as a place where students can see their event calendar and newsletter.
- Theresa noted that Shay has agreed to serve in the role of BSSC website publisher, to help keep the information on the website current. All items need to be ADA compliant before they are posted.

Student Outreach Project Updates

- Vicki thanked people who came to one of the training sessions held for the Black Matador outreach phone campaign. There will be additional training workshops this Friday.
- She noted that they received a data file from IR that helped to decrease call loads to around 1600 calls. Ryan is working with Elizabeth Adams to send a text message, via the Chat Bot, to students before the phone campaign begins.
- Ryan noted that two separate text messages would be going out, along with an email letting students know that someone from the Council would be calling them. These are expected to go out in the next two weeks.
- Vicki mentioned that some of the goals include trying to understand where the students are, if they have a sense of belonging at CSUN, identifying how we can support them in the current virtual environment, and how they are dealing with the issues facing the wider community. The questions are designed to encourage students to open up about what their experiences, and share how the Council can help to support them.
- Vicki thanked Vera, Debra, and Theresa for their help developing the scripts and questions.
- Ryan noted that we will be flexible in the number of students Council members are asked to call, and will base it on each member's availability.

Student Voices

- Theresa opened up time for the students on the Council to share with group.
- Rocky noted a conversation with Black leaders on campus regarding how to provide funding, plans to retain Black students and the importance of having staff and

administrators who the students can relate to throughout the campus community. She also discussed a desire for funding for mentors for Black students, and hopes the university will create scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students to help alleviate financial burdens related to managing both home and school life.

- Ebony mentioned that, in her role as a student leader for the Black Lives Matter, Northridge group, she is working to help Black and Brown student organizations with promoting and marketing their events. Most events are focused on the importance of voting at the moment. Marcy asked what organizations are educating/mobilizing students about voting. Ebony mentioned the Black House podcast, called Black Table Talk, which airs every Tuesday at 8:00pm (on blogtalkradio.com/thecsunblackhouse), where the Black House Coordinators have dedicated segments to helping students understand the importance of voting. Marcy offered to help with guest speakers and resources that would help Black students get involved in voting. Theresa noted that voting is a top priority for the Black House team this semester. Marcy mentioned Rev. Lawson as a resource for the campus. Vicki added that the campus has a program called We the People that helps bring voting awareness to students. The website for We the People is <https://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement/we-people>.
- Deion noted that Associated Students is working on the We the People event along with another event called Big Politics. He will update the Council after they meet this week. Theresa asked if Ebony and Deion would create a list of voting events/information being made available to students.
- Dawn said the Athletic Dept is also putting together some information on voter registration for all student athletes, coaches and staff. She would like to help bring resources together with Ebony.
- Deion mentioned that he is working on identifying systematic barriers in the Associated Students constitution that they are hoping to have reviewed.

CSUN Response to BLM

- Debra opened up conversation about the statements that various departments are in the process of writing in response to Black Lives Matter movements taking place around the country, including statements from the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion (CBI), the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA), the Africana Studies Department and the Faculty Senate. What does the BSSC want to do with regards to a statement?
- Kenny shared the CSUN Faculty Senate Statement of Solidarity with Black Lives Matter with the Council. Theresa read through it and invited the Council to contact the Faculty Senate with any feedback.

- Teiana Jones asked if the notes from Faculty Senate were also extended to staff? How can staff have a voice in Faculty Senate? Theresa noted that the Black Faculty and Staff Association serves as the best platform for staff voices.
- Vicki asked if there a place online where all these statements have been brought together? The information might be placed in several locations. Marcy suggested the Black Faculty and Staff website as a good place. Del suggested they go on the CSUN homepage as a show of solidarity. It was also suggested that the BSSC website would be a good place to record them.
- Ryan suggested inviting a representative from the Black Alumni Association to join the Black Student Success Council.
- Del discussed the recent Black Faculty and Staff Association town hall and the list of demands they plan to submit to the campus including: looking at a policy change regarding how buildings and rooms are named, having the records of students who were arrested on campus during protest expunged, creating a memorial for Black students in the art department, increasing the number of black licensed therapists on campus, increasing the number of Black students on campus and increasing the hiring of Black faculty and staff on campus.
- Marcy noted that the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion is drafting a 10-point action plan that will include many of the things Del mentioned. Also, the creation of a diversity and equity innovation grant that will be open to all members of the campus community during the first year. The focus would be on efforts related to the recruitment and retention of African American/Black students, faculty and staff, and other concerns related to the Black community on campus.
- Theresa asked the Council to think about the statement we would like to put forward to represent the Black Student Success Council's voices. What points should be included?
- Vicki suggested incorporating the other statements that have come out and including a statement of why we exist at CSUN (our history) and why we need to be doing better.
- Del added that we need to talk about on how we have lost Black students on this campus and why students are not choosing CSUN.
- Ryan asked if we could create a mandatory training about anti-racism that everyone can go take, similar to Title IX training that is required. Rocky also thought it would be a good idea.
- Elizabeth Gutierrez would like to see a separate mandatory cultural sensitivity training for all employees at CSUN that deals with racism. Gigi suggested adding it to the current harassment training for the new MPPs. Dawn suggested also adding it to New Employee Orientation.

- Del suggested that the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion and Faculty Development run unconscious bias, anti-racist, social justice workshops that might be made available to the campus community.
- Jalani Ligons suggested that the campus should have a level of enforcement or zero tolerance policy for racism on campus.
- Theresa noted the importance of participating in anti-racism and cultural sensitivity training, but also highlighted the difficulty of “requiring” participation due to the CFA collective bargaining agreement.
- Teiana asked if, aside from Title IX issues, can we ask that the campus address what will happen when there are concerns or reports of racism? Or can we state what our expectations are since issues of racism have been reported by various parts of campus over the years and specifically acknowledging how individuals in protected positions can move forward without retaliation.
- Some people who are in vulnerable positions and not protected by unions.
- Elizabeth Adams noted that Barrett Morris in Equity and Diversity is emerging as a real leader on those issues.

Announcements

- Next BSSC meeting is scheduled for August 11th at 2:00pm.
- Abram Milton - USU Healing Space every Friday at 12 noon. He is working with Ryan and the Black Male Scholars program, and is also working with the Association of Black Psychologists.
- Vera - SOAR working on some recruitment efforts for Black students and changes to the website. They plan on hosting webinars in the near future. Mechelle asked if Black faculty could be highlighted in some of the material SOAR produces.
- Gigi noted that SOAR is working on some special recruitment efforts this year and asked for help identifying people we should be directing Black students to for help and assistance.
- Ryan noted that funding was received from CQF for Wisdom and Black Male Scholars. We also noted that the recent Black Graduation event hosted by CalPoly is on YouTube and on Black Male Scholars Instagram page.
- Theresa stated that the 2020 Captured Multimedia Student Research Journal is being put together by the student editorial team, and is in the final stage of production. She asked that photos/videos from the Black Lives Matter protests be submitted to the journal at capturedjournal@gmail.com. Photos should include a caption or a sentence of inspiration from the student submitting it.

- Gigi asked for Council members to let her know if there were more black CSUN alumni from the Bay area or the IE to send her a note. Teiana noted that she is from Chicago, Olani is from the IE and Mechelle is from Barbados.

Adjourn