

Involved to Evolve: Student Voices on Campus Climate and Sense of Belonging

Utah State University Student Panel

Jamal-Jared Alexander

Technical Communication and Rhetoric, Doctoral Student

Amand L. Hardiman

Human Development and Family Studies, Doctoral Student

Jessica Chatman

Counseling, Master's Student

Kirk Napoleon

Business Administration, Undergraduate Student

Theresa Botchway

Math, Undergraduate Student

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Improving the campus climate and creating a sense of belonging for BISOC

- **Consider your positionality going into this Inclusive Excellence Symposium presentation.**
 - Name your identities (race, ethnicity, culture, status, gender or sexual identity, ability, SES, religion/spirituality, professional roles, lived experience, privilege, power, etc.) that influence who you are and your interaction with this space.
- **Amand described the importance of a sense of belonging for Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color (“BISOC”) so that they can “not only survive, but thrive” while at USU.**
 - What did Amand say contributes to a sense of belonging for BISOC at USU?
 - How can you in your role as a student, faculty, staff, or community member help BISOC at USU feel a sense of belonging?
 - Why does representation matter for BISOC at USU?
- **Jamal-Jared explained that BISOC research USU’s campus climate before deciding to attend.**
 - What aspects of USU’s campus climate may be challenging for prospective and current BISOC?
 - How can you in your role as a student, faculty, staff, and/or community member support a more inclusive campus climate for USU’s BISOC?
- **Both Amand and Jamal-Jared described the importance of mental health resources for BISOC.**
 - USU has mental health resources for students available through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).
 - Resources for assisting a student in distress are available at studentconduct.usu.edu/sid.
- **Theresa, Kirk, Jamal-Jared, Amand, and Jessica each described what they love about their racial identities. Jamal-Jared emphasized that the panelists “are not ambassadors for the same Black community. [They] each have different backgrounds, belief systems, experiences, and interests.”**
 - What did you learn about each of these student’s unique identities and experiences?
 - In your role as a student, faculty, staff, and/or community member, how can you help BISOC feel safe and welcome to share their unique identities at USU?
- **Amand described racial battle fatigue.**
 - What is racial battle fatigue?
 - How might you or other members of the USU community have contributed to the exhaustion of BISOC?
 - How can you seek information and answers to questions about racial injustice without overtaxing BISOC at USU?
- **Jamal-Jared stated that, “You are either for Black liberation or for Black death. There is no in-between. It is about holding people, programs, communities, and departments accountable.”**
 - What are some things Jamal-Jared listed that you can do to hold ourselves accountable and to better support diversity and inclusion in our departments and programs?
 - What are additional things Jamal-Jared did not list that you can do?
- **What did Theresa suggest a person do when they do not know how to pronounce someone’s name?**
- **How has your view about the experience of BISOC shifted since viewing this presentation?**
- **As Theresa asked, “What are you going to do to stand up for people of color” at USU?**

RESOURCES

- The Souls of Black Folk
- Self-Identity: A Key to Black Student Success, Andrea T. J. Ross, Angela M. Powell, and Richard C. Henriksen, Jr. (2016)
- Broken Mirrors: Black Student Representation at Public State Colleges and Universities, Andrew Howard Nichols and J. Oliver Schak, edtrust.org (2019)
- Nearly Half of Undergraduates are Students of Color. But Black Students Lag Behind. Sarah Brown, Chronicle of Higher Education (Feb. 14, 2019)
- A Call to Revitalize Mental Health Wellness Practices for Black, Indigenous, & College Students of Color, Tyra Jean, Syracuse University Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion (Aug. 26, 2020)
- A List of Books on Racism, Films, and Other Anti-Racism Resources

Writer: Alison Adams

Editor: Jeffrey Spears