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This summer, racial injustices that have existed for centuries made headlines on national and local levels. In response, millions of people stood against racism and pushed for change. And many continue pushing for change. At Penn State and in State College, community members have used their voices to combat racism and advocate for equality.

This edition highlights just a few of those voices.

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# Addressing UPUA's history of racism

By Christina Baker  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In 2019, Edred Richardson joined the University Park Undergraduate Association's 14th Assembly as its first-ever Black Caucus representative.

The 14th Assembly was the most diverse in UPUA's history, with roughly 50% of the representatives being students of color.

It was also almost completely segregated, according to past and present UPUA representatives.

Although the creation of UPUA's "community representative" seats — positions representing large, identity-based student organizations — had nearly universal support, Richardson said the move inflamed already-existing tensions within UPUA, creating a toxic experience for community representatives themselves.

Now, a year and a half later — in the 15th Assembly, the second to have the community representative seats — the change provides a lesson in the drawbacks and benefits that diversity can bring to an organization.

The process to create community representative seats, according to former Speaker of the Assembly Tom Sarabok, was initially a difficult one.

During the 13th Assembly, members of Black Caucus, Latino Caucus and Asian Pacific Islander Desi-American Caucus came to UPUA's open student forum every week to try to persuade representatives that the seats were important.

Current UPUA Vice President Lexy Pathickal, who at the time was among the students pushing for change, remembered being upset that it was taking so long to enact what she felt was a common-sense reform.

By the time the seats came to a vote on the floor, Sarabok said, "it was pretty much unanimous."

However, current UPUA President Zachary McKay said he suspected some representatives voted in favor of community seats because they were worried about the optics of doing otherwise.

"I think a lot of people wanted to vote 'yes' because it would have looked bad to vote 'no,'" McKay (senior-economics) said. "Especially when, for example, the Black Caucus has showed up in numbers, verbally supporting it, [and] frankly calling any-



Noah Riffe/Colegian

one who didn't support it a white supremacist."

Richardson and Sarabok, who both graduated in May 2020, said by the time the community representatives joined the 14th Assembly, the already-existing representatives were generally enthusiastic about the idea.

However, that enthusiasm didn't always extend to the community representatives themselves, according to Richardson and Genevieve Miller, a Black at-large representative in the 14th Assembly.

Miller, who graduated in May 2020, said it was immediately clear to her that her UPUA experience would be "terrible."

Miller said she had been friendly with some white representatives during her campaign, and she sat with them during her first UPUA meeting.

"And I remember being completely ignored," Miller said. "Almost like, 'You should not be on this side of the room.'"

UPUA meetings took place in a room with a big aisle running through the middle, and after that day, the assembly became nearly perfectly split. Representatives of color sat on one side of the aisle, Miller said, and white representatives sat on the other.

"We stuck to ourselves, but it wasn't like we just pushed ourselves to be by ourselves," Miller said. "It was kind of forced upon us to be together."

According to Pathickal (senior-political science), committee meetings often had the same divisions.

At one point, UPUA leadership moved the representatives'

placards around so they would be seated randomly, but Miller said the white representatives just moved their placards back.

Because McKay was the chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee in the 14th Assembly, he was required to sit at the front of the room, and he said the UPUA leadership discouraged him from interfering with the seating arrangements.

"I would have found a way to mingle throughout the UPUA, to help bridge that divide a little bit," McKay said. "And I was explicitly asked not to."

Richardson said seating all the representatives of color together provided the benefit of strength in numbers when they had to advocate against legislation that would have had disproportionate effects on non-white students.

"It's hard getting that across," Richardson said. "So we kind of found solidarity within each other."

Sarabok said he felt the divide in the assembly wasn't necessarily racial. Rather, the tensions were between representatives who had been serving in UPUA for years and newer representatives who wanted structural change.

He said because UPUA had been so white for so long, most people of color fell in the latter category.

Pathickal, McKay and former APIDA Caucus representative Yoo-Jin Jeong agreed that representatives' political beliefs were a factor in the divisions, but Jeong (junior-health policy and administration) said race still played a role that could not be ignored.

Alexander Wu, the current APIDA Caucus representative who was then serving as the representative for the College of Arts and Architecture, said he didn't notice the racial divide at all and did not feel excluded.

Beyond the seating arrangements, no one interviewed for this story denied the existence of what current Speaker of the Assembly Steven Zhang described as "systemic racism" within UPUA — and nearly every representative of color had a story to tell.

At times, Miller said she felt personally targeted by white representatives.

She was UPUA's liaison to the State College Borough Council, and sometimes white representatives would bypass her to try to influence the council members, she said.

"I was almost seen as not able to do my job," Miller said. "I had a lot of people step on my toes [who] shouldn't have, that are still in UPUA today. They were able to say whatever they wanted to say, or just overstep and try to take control of my position."

Nearly every representative of color interviewed said they had felt tokenized at some point, including Pathickal, who joined UPUA during the 14th Assembly as the chair of the Outreach Committee.

"At times, I questioned, 'Am I in this role for my qualities and my experience, or is it more because I'm being tokenized?'" Pathickal said.

On some occasions, other representatives called Pathickal a "white" person of color, which

she said was "very upsetting" and "its own form of racism."

Often, Pathickal said, when she or other representatives of color would talk about their experiences with racism, a white representative would try to question, minimize or dismiss their concerns.

Jeong said her efforts to bond with fellow representatives were often rebuffed, leaving her "hurt."

Between the unwelcoming environment and UPUA's reputation for being racist, Jeong said she often feels embarrassed to say she is part of UPUA.

"The reason why I keep putting myself in UPUA," Jeong said, "[is that] I feel like it's a duty for me as a person of color to stand up for my peers."

According to Pathickal and McKay, UPUA's leadership was aware of the assembly's problems with race. The topic came up multiple times in meetings of the Steering Committee, which includes the president and vice president, directors of major executive departments, the chief justice, the speaker of the assembly and the chairs of every committee.

At one point during the 14th Assembly, McKay created an informal survey about the internal climate of UPUA and asked representatives to complete it so he could present it to his fellow Steering Committee members.

The survey asked representatives to rate how much they felt welcomed, how much they felt there was a divide between personal and professional relationships within the assembly, and whether they felt they could report concerns to UPUA leadership without facing retaliation, among other questions.

No one outside of the Steering Committee ever saw the results of the survey, which Zhang (junior-economics and political science) said was very frustrating to representatives of color.

McKay said when he presented the survey during a Steering Committee meeting, it didn't yield "a very comprehensive discussion."

According to McKay, 39.1% of respondents to the survey felt they could raise concerns to UPUA leadership without fear of personal or professional repercussions.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.

## Inside UPUA's efforts to combat racism

By Megan Swift  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The University Park Undergraduate Association's 15th Assembly is working to combat internal racism within the organization after receiving allegations of racism from representatives of color.

Lexy Pathickal, the vice president of UPUA, said that many of the assembly's representatives of color "haven't felt welcome."

"There's a lot more pressure on them representing their communities," Pathickal (senior-political science) said. "It's actually impossible for one person to do that for their entire community."

She said after allegations of racism were made against UPUA and some members, she was able to gain "more insight" into what members of UPUA were feeling, which inspired part of her platform during her campaign with UPUA President Zachary McKay.

"During our campaign, we ran on the fact that we wanted to create an inclusive environment, change the atmosphere and make it more open," Pathickal said. "Everything that has happened [since we were elected] has made us question our leadership."

### What UPUA has done

Pathickal spoke about the ways

in which UPUA is trying to be "anti-racist," starting with free six-hour anti-racism training through the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso. She explained that all members must complete the training and inform UPUA leadership after they have done so.

"[The course] goes through allyship and social awareness," Steven Zhang, the speaker of the assembly, said. "[It helps members understand] these prejudices and how [they] can speak out against them."

Zhang (junior-economics and political science) said UPUA has historically been a "predominantly white" organization, and he believes this has contributed to "a lot of animosity" against the organization.

"Many have joined the UPUA and left because they don't feel it's a welcoming environment," Zhang said. "Advocacy and empathy are very important for people to understand each other."

Zhang said he believes that though the allegations of racism in UPUA's past are "valid," the organization "made really big progress two years ago" by adding community group seats for cultural caucuses on campus.

Community group seats allow for various identity-based organizations to be represented within UPUA and act as liaisons between UPUA and their respective groups.

"That was just step one of making sure we have representation on campus," Zhang said. "The big thing about this year's administration and leadership [is we're] committed to making sure we are being inclusive."

Zhang said the assembly is working to find both short-term and long-term solutions to "discourage discrimination" within the organization. The anti-racism training was part of UPUA's short-term solution, he added.

"No way is this tackling all of the issues, but it's a good starting point to promote further conversations and awareness," Zhang said. "Almost all members have completed [the training]."

Though he said it's hard to "pinpoint" the effectiveness of the anti-racism training because of the coronavirus pandemic, Zhang plans to hold one-on-one sessions with representatives to better gauge the effectiveness.

"We haven't received any complaints," Zhang said.

Najee Rodriguez, the chair of the Justice and Equity Committee for UPUA, said the anti-racism training helped bring awareness to the organization about "the issues that are so prevalent in our society."

"It's important that those who don't fall into those communities see what it's like," Rodriguez (sophomore-

international politics and history) said. "There's no way to guarantee people watched all of the lessons; it was entirely their prerogative to absorb that information."

Rodriguez said he hopes the training wasn't seen as "another homework assignment," but rather that it "stuck with" a lot of members.

"As a representative, it's your duty to represent the entirety of Penn State," Rodriguez said. "I'm hoping we can practice what we learned in these lessons [because] it's still your duty to protect and advocate for communities, no matter how small."

Rodriguez said one of the new duties of his job on the Justice and Equity Committee is to ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are "brought into every conversation" during UPUA meetings.

"There's a lot of deep-rooted distrust of the UPUA, and we're actively trying to fix that," Rodriguez said. "There's been incremental progress over the years, but we're pushing it over the edge; this is kind of a turning point."

In addition to implementing anti-racism training for everyone in UPUA, UPUA leadership has been holding bi-weekly meetings on the "Racial Healing Handbook" to talk about "personal experiences of racism" and talk more introspectively on the subject, according to Zhang.

He explained the long-term plans for UPUA to eliminate internal racism will be more "structural," so that people "feel comfortable speaking out."

"[We want to] make sure every single assembly in the future has some of the tools to understand the issues and actively fight against racism," Zhang said. "As long as we have a framework there, we can actively promote anti-racism in future assemblies."

### What UPUA plans to do

Pathickal said one of the institutional changes the 15th Assembly is trying to implement is a hearing process in the judicial board for instances of racism within the organization. This way, she said

representatives of color would know there is "a process" they could go through if they experience racism within UPUA.

Another change Pathickal said the organization is trying to make is to establish an "election code."

"We're hoping that something might be implemented as part of the requirement for people to run for UPUA election like diversity training," Zhang said. "We really want to make sure we have a firm structure for the future."

Pathickal said the Ad Hoc Committees — groups within the executive, legislative and judicial branches of UPUA often focused on a specific task — have been discussing implementing anti-racism training and workshop requirements for members to complete before they're able to run in elections.

These changes, Pathickal said, are currently on track to be implemented during this school year.

"By the end of the fall or by the beginning of the spring, [we're hoping] to come together as a large collective unit and get every idea across," Pathickal said. "We have a session every spring to go through the election code, constitution and bylaws."

Zhang said UPUA is hoping to implement UPUA-wide town halls to "drill these issues home" in the future.

"I like to be candid about these issues; there's no need for racism in UPUA's history to be covered up," Zhang said. "I don't believe in this being some sort of damage control. I want my leadership to be committed to this."

Pathickal said if there isn't a more "robust system" in place to "keep racism out of UPUA" before she and McKay graduate, she knows other representatives in the organization would continue the work to make sure a system is implemented in the future.

"Being actively anti-racist is not an easy thing to do — it's going to be a long term [with] a lot of uncomfortable conversations," Pathickal said. "At the end of the day, it needs to be done."

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Collegian File Photo

**Members of the caucuses** in favor of the legislation to put three new community representative seats in UPUA celebrate the passing with a vote of 39-1 during the UPUA meeting on Wednesday Oct. 3, 2018.



# Indigenous faculty, staff on heritage

By Melissa Manno  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Although less than 1% of Penn State’s total population is Native American — including students, faculty and staff — Indigenous professors and staff have found a community with each other and aim to create change.

Julie Reed is an associate professor of history in the College of the Liberal Arts and is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Growing up, Reed said she had no interest in education or history because of the way it was taught in the classroom.

“I didn’t see the kinds of people that interested me throughout history being reflected back to me in what I was learning — whether that be women, Native Americans or African Americans,” Reed said. “I wanted to understand why their lives existed the way it did, and how people have come to be who they are today.”

Prior to arriving at Penn State, Reed worked for eight years at the University of Tennessee, which is near the land her ancestors were removed from, so she said it felt like home in a way. Penn State, on the other hand, did not feel like home.

“Even though there’s only a few Native students, faculty and staff at Penn State, we’re creating a Native community — which is good — but most of us are also probably grappling with our own communities being so far away,” Reed said. “For those of us that have strong ties to our home communities, that can be particularly hard.”

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Pennsylvania is one of 13 states without any federally recognized tribes, and one of 12 states without a commission or office dedicated to Native American issues.

“The dispossession of Native people in Pennsylvania is real and deep, so there isn’t a core group around which to have larger conversations about Native people and their presence today,” Reed said. “Because of this, I think



Noah Riffe/Colegian

Old Main’s former bell sits in front of Old Main in University Park, Pennsylvania, on Friday, Aug. 21.

it’s easy for Pennsylvanians to forget that Native people still exist and are diverse, and that there are still living descendants of the people who originally settled on this land.”

Reed said one of the biggest challenges she has faced is getting people to recognize the Indigenous land in Pennsylvania — more specifically, State College.

She, along with several other Native Americans at Penn State, are working on a land acknowledgement that would recognize Indigenous tribes as the original stewards of Penn State’s land.

“Beyond acknowledging the land and saying we recognize the people who lived here, we need to go a step further to form relationships with these communities today that isn’t about ‘let us help you,’ so much as ‘what can we partner on together to make Penn State a better place, not just as an institution, but as a good citizen in terms of its responsibility to those that came before it.’”

According to High Country News, Penn State’s 780,000-acre grant “came from the homelands of more than 112 tribes” and “is connected to 50 land cessions cast across 16 states.”

“This university benefitted from the dispossession of people

from around the whole country, so we need to think about what responsibility we have to those communities as well,” Reed said. “Penn State wouldn’t be able to fund itself in certain kinds of ways without the continual dispossession of Native people.”

Reed’s Cherokee father served in the Air Force, so she became accustomed to moving around throughout her childhood. Summers were spent in Oklahoma, not far from the Cherokee Nation’s jurisdictional area. Growing up, her father had a complicated relationship with his Indigenous heritage due to his parent’s separation, Reed said, as he was discouraged from spending time with his own Cherokee family at a young age. She said this had a “profound impact on his own relationship to understanding who he was as a Cherokee.”

“My dad was born in 1943, when there were policies of termination and relocation forming, which you don’t need to know much about to know those words don’t sound good,” Reed said. “I was born in the 70s, when we were in an era of self-determination where it was cool to be Indian, and there was a lot of revitalization happening within communities. Being born in those two different moments

shaped our own ideas of what it meant to be Cherokee.”

For Reed, being Cherokee means honoring the sacrifices her ancestors made to keep her community alive today.

“There were numerous sacrifices made over generations so that the Cherokee nation could still exist, and it’s my responsibility as a Cherokee person to kind of acknowledge and understand all those sacrifices,” Reed said, “but also to honor them by making sure the Cherokee nation and people continue to exist and have a place in this world for more generations to come.”

She also emphasized that there is not one single way to be Cherokee, and that it’s an extremely diverse nation.

“To suggest to Native people who haven’t had a chance to live on their homelands because of conditions beyond their control that they are somehow less Indian is wrong, and it ignores the history that led to those conditions,” Reed said. “The legacies of colonialism don’t allow everyone to have the same relationship to language, land, family, kin and history.”

College of Agricultural Sciences Administrative Assistant Kathryn Pletcher is an enrolled member of the Lake Superior

band of Ojibwe. She said one of the biggest challenges of being an Indigenous person at a predominantly white institution is the lack of representation.

“I would say we are sort of invisible,” Pletcher said. “We aren’t touted as a minority, but we’re almost like the forgotten minority because there’s such a small number of us.”

Pletcher said she hasn’t endured many obstacles at Penn State, but said there is ignorance at the local level, which is demonstrated by Bellefonte Area High School’s “Red Raider” mascot.

Pletcher is also actively involved in campus movements to gain exposure and representation for Indigenous communities, including implementing a land acknowledgement statement. She said she hopes these efforts will help boost Indigenous enrollment for students, faculty and staff and put Penn State on the map in terms of awareness.

Associate Professor of Education Hollie Kulago is of the Diné — also known as the Navajo Nation located in the southwest United States. She grew up on the reservation and saw early on the power education held.

“Education was used to get rid of our language and to strip us of our way of being and knowing, and it was powerful in disrupting a lot of things,” Kulago said. “But we’re still here. We still exist, and we’re still working to revive and strengthen our nations and ways of knowing and languages.”

Kulago said she decided to pursue education because she wanted to “center Indigenous knowledge and put value back into the language.” As a professor in the College of Education, she’s also done research on a variety of Indigenous topics, such as teacher education certification, family, school and community relationships.

“The university is a very white institution, so there are specific ways of knowing that are valued,” Kulago said.

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## Committee honors King’s legacy

By Quincey Reese  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Penn State MLK Commemoration Student Committee is seeking to show the community a more complete picture of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s beliefs, as well as how they apply to the current Black Lives Matter movement.

The committee consists of eight directors, and focuses on planning a week of commemorative events in honor of King that begin on MLK Day — the third Monday of January — each year.

To divide the planning evenly, there are four separate groups of directors: campus and community events, public relations, Day of Service and Evening Celebration. Each of these subcategories has two co-directors, except for public relations.

Executive Director Makayla Ashe said the group picks a theme to base its events around each year.

The week starts with a Day of Service, an event in which participants gather to volunteer at various local venues for the day. After a couple of mid-week events organized by the campus and community events directors, the week closes out with the Evening Celebration. Here, a speaker gives a lecture, followed by an open discussion of the speaker’s topic.

According to Ashe (senior-statistics), the committee spent a lot of time brainstorming this year’s theme when it began planning after the 2020 spring semester wrapped. Co-directors read the book “Misremembering Dr. King: Revisiting the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.” to help them decide a proper course of action.

In addition to creating a smooth transition from last year’s theme of “The Story of U.S.: Exposing the Unarmed Truth,” Ashe said the committee wanted to take into account the riots and protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement that occurred this past summer after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Ashe said the group took notice of individuals who criticized protestors and rioters for taking a violent course of action, ultimately deciding to speak out against through the theme “Radical Revolution: Speaking the

Language of the Unheard.”

“MLK has a quote which talks about how ‘a riot is the language of the unheard,’ and how a riot and rioters in general are not responsible for riots,” Ashe said. “What’s actually responsible for riots is demands ignored.”

For this reason, Ashe said the committee found it important to show the Penn State community that King understood that violence signifies a greater injustice has been done.

Ashe added she found it interesting that President Donald Trump used the phrase “radical revolution” in a negative connotation during the first 2020 presidential debate.

“Donald Trump actually used the words ‘radical revolution’ in a negative way to sort of describe what liberals — or whatever he said — are looking for, and he’s right,” Ashe said. “What a lot of people want is a reconstruction of this country as we understand it, and we wanted to incorporate that.”

Evening Celebration Co-Director Uchenna Nwodim said some individuals misunderstand King’s stance on riots and violence, which is why they look down upon people who speak out in these ways.

“I feel like over the summer, there was a lot of commen-

tary saying ‘this isn’t what MLK would want,’ and I think people need to understand that MLK lived through a lot of events of political turmoil,” Nwodim (senior-political science) said.

Adding to this, Nwodim said she does not find it fair for people to bring King “into the future” and assume he would think or act a certain way. Rather, she said people should respect what he did and said during his lifetime, and translate those messages into the context of today.

Nwodim said the committee wanted to make these points clear to the Penn State community and capitalize on the fact that people have been paying closer attention to the Black Lives Matter movement, which is a big part of what led them to this year’s theme.

Ashe said it is essential for the committee to “think critically about the moment” the world is in, while continuing the tradition of discussing King’s legacy each year.

“I don’t think you can commemorate any part of the civil rights movement without having an understanding of your current climate, as well,” Ashe said.

Campus and Community Events Co-Director Jordan Diamond said another influence behind the committee’s theme choice was “the feeling of annoying repetitiveness” the group noticed after considering the current state of society regarding race.

“A Black person [could be] shot or murdered and then people will just say, ‘Oh yeah, police brutality isn’t a thing,’ or you get into the conversation of ‘What was their record? What were they doing?’” Diamond (senior-psychology and political science) said. “And that kind of takes away from the story of what actually happened, because all of those other things don’t matter in that moment when that person no longer can speak or say anything about that situation.”

In terms of preparing for commemoration week, Ashe said the committee usually relies on the “groundwork” laid by the previous year’s directors. This year, however, Ashe said the group can’t do this because of the limitations presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

Ashe added that the group doesn’t know what the guidelines will be in January, so it has to design multiple versions of its events — one that accounts for restrictions to virtual events, another that allows for in-person gatherings and a final one for the possibility of mixed-mode activities.

“In order to make any of this work in a virtual space, you kind of have to have a plan A, plan B, plan C,” Ashe said. “It requires even more than it has in previous years.”

Based on current coronavirus protocol and restrictions, Ashe said the committee is focusing on planning virtual events while keeping in mind the possibility of incorporating optional, in-person components later.

According to Diamond, the committee is utilizing the virtual format to host events prior to commemoration week. These include a debate series inspired by the upcoming presidential election, a movie screening of the film “Cooked: Survival by Zip Code” and an event to promote voter registration.

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Graphic by Grace Miller/Colegian

## Examining the Black, white health disparity

By Madigan Lubold  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Stress that institutionalized racism places on the shoulders of Black citizens in America is one of the biggest causes of the health disparity between Black and white people, according to Kianna Bingham, the president of Penn State’s National Council of Negro Women.

The stress Bingham (junior-political science and African American studies) experiences every day as a Black woman attending a predominantly white institution has led her to take on a double major and a double minor, she said.

“I don’t have the liberty of being average. I don’t have the privilege of being normal,” Bingham said. “I have to be better than my white peers in order to be recognized.”

Bingham said it’s “rare” to see a Black student with only one major in college.

According to Sheldon Fields, the associate dean for equity and inclusion in the College of Nursing, a health disparity is the difference in access to health care due to institutionalized racism and social determinants such as socioeconomic background.

Equality in health care is a “fantasy,” he said.

“Institutionalized racism is very real,” Fields said. “It is based on people’s lived experiences, and there’s a big difference in access to [health care services.]”

Fields has researched the disparities in health care and worked as a policy adviser for a senator who helped pass the Affordable Care Act, according to a Penn State News release.

There are certain areas of the country where the access to affordable and healthy food is limited or nonexistent, according to Fields. He said this lack

of healthy foods in low-income areas is an example of a social determinant that leads to health disparities.

Adam Douglas, a member of the Black Male Leadership Symposium, said there are a multitude of reasons why the health disparity between Black and white Americans exists.

The disparity could be attributed to the community in which one lives, or the social stigma that Black people refuse medical assistance, according to Douglas (freshman-business management).

Douglas said white people are more cautious and sensitive when it comes to seeking medical attention and health care — whereas in the Black community, they are taught to be more “rigid and tough.”

“There is no ‘I think I have depression,’” Douglas said. “It’s more along the lines of, ‘I guess I need to figure out how to be happy,’ rather than seeking help and receiving medication.”

Douglas’s mother is a health care worker, so he and his family are more aware of health and well-being, he said.

“If it wasn’t for my mother, my dad wouldn’t take us to the hospital unless our limbs were falling off,” Douglas said.

He also said it’s unfortunate because research, word of mouth and who you surround yourself with clouds perceptions about health, and at a young age, different communities instill certain beliefs about health.

Overall, he said white communities more often acknowledge how to manage health than Black communities, and are able to implement ways to do so.

It is stressful to be Black in America, Fields said, and this stress places the body in a flight or fight mode.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



# Black Caucus president advocates for change

By Kyle Hutchinson  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As the world has watched and participated in movements against racial injustice, many have realized the importance of amplifying the voices of students of color:

One of those voices advocating for change is Nyla Holland, the president of Penn State's Black Caucus.

Born and raised in Philadelphia with her older sister and three younger siblings, Holland (senior-political science and African American studies) said she originally sought a degree in kinesiology before shifting her studies to political science and African American studies.

"I've always been passionate about social justice, and I wanted to help people that look like me that are in worse circumstances," Holland said. "I wanted to be a part of doing that."

In the early days at Penn State, Holland joined Black Caucus. She's been with the organization ever since, serving as the political action chair on the executive board her freshman year, secretary sophomore and junior years and president this year.

"I had gone to a few other organizations' meetings, but [Black Caucus] felt different," Holland said. "It was in this room, we all sat around a table, so everyone felt like they had somewhat of an equal part of the organization."

She said the organization gave her a big opportunity to get to know people and befriend students at the university.

"The mission of Black Caucus is very powerful," Holland said. "It brings together a community that can be very fragmented across the university, and its history of making change is something I could not pass up on."

As president, Holland has bi-weekly meetings focused on creating an alumni network for Black Penn Staters, promotes mental and physical health through the organization's "Get Fit" program, and strives to be more activist- and justice-oriented.

Michael Kume, a member of the Black Caucus, spoke highly of Holland's work ethic.

"I've known Nyla since my freshman year here at Penn State, and she's always been one of the most driven and goal-oriented people I know," Kume (senior-chemical engineering) said. "She genuinely invests herself into whatever she's doing, be it her classes, extracurriculars or activism."

While on the executive board through the summer, Kume said he saw firsthand her "ambition and devotion" to Black Caucus's improvement.



Noah Riffe/Collegian

Nyla Holland, president of Black Caucus, poses for a portrait at Old Main Lawn on Oct. 9.

president and considering how hectic this year has been overall, I can genuinely say she's been one of the few people that we can look to for inspiration," Kume said.

At Penn State, Black professors only make up 3.9% of all professors. Black students account for 4.3% of the undergraduate population, despite making up 13% of the general population.

Holland said to better amplify Black voices, funding and effort from the university is needed.

"[More funding put] into recruiting Black students is important, and something I've heard the admissions office does not do enough of, as well as retention of Black students and that there is enough financial aid and scholarship opportunities for them," Holland said.

Holland also noted a few things the State College community could do to attract Black students.

She said State College lacks eateries that provide historically Black meals or food, as well as places for Black students to get hair products or have their hair done.

Holland said she has to get her friends to help with her hair at times.

"It's hard to sell [Black prospective students] with that. Black students should feel comfortable to live here," Holland said. "They shouldn't have to go back home in order to buy things

comforts of food like home."

She also said that too often, Black voices are tokenized at Penn State.

"Certain students will use the same voices for campaigns and reuse them all around without giving them the proper support or seeing what other talent there is out there," Holland said.

She also expressed concern with how some Black students have faced microaggressions from counselors working at Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services.

"[Students of color] should not have to deal with that when they are trying to avoid that in their classrooms, residence halls or anywhere else," Holland

said.

In response, CAPS said it is committed to listening and learning from marginalized communities.

"We want to help students from marginalized communities be heard," said Natalie Hernandez DePalma, CAPS assistant director for clinical services and former coordinator of multicultural programs and services. "We are aware that we are only human, and at some points may not land certain comments, but we are committed to staying in the conversation and helping with that repair."

Holland said if Penn State "wants to push something," it "can find a way to do it."

because the university advertises it out there, and Homecoming and organizations that have such strong foundations in the community," Holland said. "Amplify the voices of the Black Caucus and other resources for Black students here."

Black Caucus member DeAndre Malcolm said Holland's determination and activism represents the organization and its community well.

"She is equipped with new means of advocacy and determination to address topics concerning social justice and the conditions of the students of color at Penn State," Malcolm (junior-public relations) said.

Malcolm has known Holland since joining the caucus, and said she is one of the hardest workers he knows.

"I've been able to witness her hard work and dedication to the organization and advocacy for Penn State students," Malcolm said.

With this summer's news cycle being dominated by police shootings of Black Americans, many people and organizations have spoken out and up for racial justice, including the university.

Holland said she would like to see a more consistent attitude toward Penn State's Black students, though.

"We should not just hear out Black students when things hit the fan like they did this summer, but make sure [the university will] consistently reach out to organizations and hear and work on their feedback — even when it's not popular," Holland said.

Holland worked with another

survey that focused on some of the problems she said are disproportionately affecting students of color during the pandemic.

"Black students and other students of color are more likely to experience homelessness, food insecurity, [and are] less likely to have a quiet place to study, viable internet access — all of the things that can help make you a successful student," Holland said.

These issues can only be made worse if Penn State goes remote because of the pandemic, Holland said.

"There are students who don't have housing at home. Is there a way students can have an option to stay on campus, which some Black students may need, as well as food, and security?" Holland said. "They need to be taken care of if we go online."

When searching for her own strength, Holland said she looks to decorated tennis player Serena Williams for inspiration.

Holland said Williams "is arguably one of the best athletes ever," and has persisted after enduring scrutiny and oppression.

"I think her life story is testament to the resiliency, versatility and beauty of Black women," Holland said.

Looking ahead, Holland said she is committed to helping others, and hopes to work "in any capacity that improves the condition of Black and other marginalized peoples."

"What I do know for certain is that I want to experience true joy in anything I end up doing."

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THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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# Latino Caucus president aims for unity

By Lilly Riddle  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Nicole Andrade's philosophy as president of the Penn State Latino Caucus can essentially be summed up in five words: "no voice should go unheard."

But she said that isn't always an easy task for the leader of a 31-year-old organization that is so wide-reaching, multifaceted and diverse.

With eight executive board members, 15 delegate organizations and three committees, Latino Caucus has quickly evolved into one of the most expansive multicultural groups on campus.

"[Latino Caucus has] always been focused on the betterment of Latinx students. That's the purpose of the organization to begin with," Andrade (senior-political science) said. "But over time, I've seen how it puts effort in to include all Latinx students... not just white Latinx students."

Not only does Andrade, who is now in her second semester as president, advocate to Penn

State administrators on behalf of the Latino student community — she also works to amplify the voices of Latino Caucus members themselves.

For students who have a tangible stake in issues currently facing the nation, Andrade said, a lot of "emotional labor" gets put into the caucus's work. But she believes each individual's input makes the organization's efforts worthwhile.

"I think the beauty of an organization like this is we're advocating for these things not just because it looks good for us to do," Andrade said, "but it literally is stuff that impacts us personally."

But Andrade doesn't want to just unite members of the Latino Caucus, which has collaborated with other caucuses on campus — namely Black Caucus, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Caucus and the newly-formed Indigenous Peoples Student Association. She wants to ensure that campus resources available to BIPOC — Black, Indigenous and people of color — students have the funding, staff

and university support they need to function.

Andrade also said she wants to hold administrators accountable for addressing demands made by the African American Studies Department in a June 16 letter to Penn State President Eric Barron, as well as on a change.org petition that amassed over 1,300 signatures.

The demands included severing ties with local police forces, increasing aid for Black students and establishing a resource center for Black faculty — who made up just 3.9% of tenure-track professors at University Park in 2018, according to a report released by the department titled "More Rivers to Cross."

Ultimately, Andrade said she views Latino Caucus's objectives as "overlapping with, but not overstepping" Black Caucus's goals.

"As multicultural students, we've got such small percentages population-wise on campus that we've all got to support each other," Andrade said. "The resources we have individually may be small... but when we put them together, it can hopefully have a bigger impact."

Nebraska Hernandez (senior-geography) met Andrade when he decided to help bring back the caucus's bilingual newsletter, ¡OYE!. Hernandez is currently the director of the group's University Relations Committee.

For Hernandez, Andrade's leadership is about knowing there are people "working underneath her, but never seeing them as beneath her."

"She's always treated people... like equals, always hearing other people's opinions, making sure students know that she is the president, but it's still a collaborative effort," Hernandez said.

Hernandez added that Andrade's "compassionate and understanding" approach to the transition online made meeting over Zoom easier.

Similarly, Luis Otaño — Latino Caucus's co-executive vice president — used two words to describe Andrade's relationship with the organization: "persistence" and "dedication."

She always makes sure everyone has a voice within the space and within the room, and she applies all of that information she's gathered to be the most efficient possible in terms of advocating to the administration," Otaño (junior-health policy and administration) said. "Right now we are working virtually, but that really hasn't stopped her or the overall executive team."

But Latino Caucus doesn't just serve its members — it has helped Andrade as well, she said. When she attended her first Latino Caucus meeting the first month of her freshman year, Andrade said it offered a "glimpse" into Penn State's multicultural community.

"It took some time for me to realize that Latino Caucus is my home away from home... because of the culture shock that myself and other multicultural students get once we come to Penn State," she said. "So from that, it became a very special organization for me, and the people within it have become like a special family to me."

*Editor's Note: The Collegian follows AP style, which is a standard in the industry. AP style uses the term "Latino" instead of "Latinx" when referring to "a person from, or whose ancestors were from, a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America." "Latinx" is sometimes used as a gender-neutral term, while Latino is traditionally used to refer to groups of men or mixed gender.*

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James Riccardo/Collegian

Nicole Jara Andrade, president of Latino Caucus, poses for a portrait on the steps of Old Main on Oct. 8.



# Puzzles

Across

1 British actor Carmichael

4 Gluttons

8 Farm butter

11 Lace tip

13 \_\_\_ Domini

14 Amazement

15 Legislative body

16 Initiating

18 G.I. entertainers

19 Theater signs

21 Dabbling duck

22 Mindy's TV pal

24 Exasperates

26 Uses a pool

29 Look-see

31 Type of burrito

33 Salon sound

34 Nothing

36 Affirmative votes

38 Serengeti grazer

39 Agent (Abbr.)

42 Born, in Bordeaux

44 Trading place

45 Military address

46 \_\_\_ pro nobis

47 Madly in love

49 Floral ring

51 View in northern Italy

53 Assignment

55 Baby buggy

58 Stagers

60 Burlesque bit

62 Downhill racer

64 Outback hoppers, briefly

66 From the top

68 1968 hit "Harper Valley \_\_\_"

69 Husky breed

72 Walk nonchalantly

74 Commotion

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75 Barber's supply

76 Courtroom event

77 Rue, in Paris

78 Bob Hoskins's role in "Hook"

79 German river

9 Barley bristle

10 Ryan of "I.Q."

11 Man of morals

12 Actress Polo

15 Total

17 Fancy marbles

20 Heavenly body

23 He's a doll

25 Leak slowly

27 Short skirt

28 Track offshoot

30 Picture card

32 Go belly up

35 Bound

37 Stride

39 Laugh heartily

40 \_\_\_ Stanley Gardner

41 News deliverer

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50 Apr. addressee

52 Blackthorn fruit

54 Food container

56 Top dogs

57 Nickel, e.g.

59 Puts into piles

61 Dry run

63 Calendar square

65 Thailand, once

67 Ending with hard or soft

69 Got an eyeful

70 Actress Lupino

71 Hearty brew

73 Mobile device card

Down

1 Tune out

2 Carte start

3 Hair controllers

4 Hotel manager's charge

5 Bank statement entry (Abbr.)

6 Pesky insect

7 Tender spots

8 Banisters

# WORD SEARCH

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## Mexican Dishes

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BUNUELOS

BURRITO

CARNITAS

CHALUPA

CHIPOTLE

CHORIZO

CHURRO

EMSPANADA

ENCHILADA

FLAN

FLAUTAS

FRIJOLE

GORDITAS

GUACAMOLE

MENUDO

MOLOTES

NACHOS

PALETAS

POZOLE

QUESADILLA

SALSA

SOPES

TACO

TAMALE

TAQUITO

TORTILLA

TOSTADA

# Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it. A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it. You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit may be used only once in any sequence.

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27 14 23 15

9 29 16 17

16 32 12 23 9

16 8 4 9 12 7 23 9

9 15 9 17 11

35 10 29 10 5

6 21

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# How racism affects the School of Theatre

By Joshua Chu  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On June 29, several posts were made on the @black at pennstate Instagram account detailing numerous racist interactions and casting choices Black students had experienced with the School of Theatre.

Many of these posts detailed incidents of faculty and students using racial slurs, inappropriately casting Black students and other students of color in shows, as well as a lack of accountability for students and faculty who participated in racist behavior.

One post detailed an incident where a vocal instructor grabbed a Black woman's hair asking her "if it was real." Another post claimed students in the school create drama and scandals if a Black person is cast over a white student.

The combination of the Instagram posts as well as the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement sparked discussions within the School of Theatre surrounding its state of diversity as a whole.

Rick Lombardo, the director of the School of Theatre and artistic director of Penn State Centre Stage, responded to these posts, speaking on behalf of many of his white colleagues who had "heard some of these stories for the first time."

While the racist nature of these posts came as a "shock" to much of the white faculty, some of the students of color attending the School of Theatre did not see these incidents as a surprise.

"I wasn't shocked at all," School of Theatre student Darron Hayes said. "This is our reality. This is real. Read [the posts], take them in. Listen and then make a change. This is our reality, and it sucks that I wasn't surprised."

School of Theatre student Elexa Hanner said the incidents within the posts "felt normal."

"All the Black people in America are just tired," Hanner (senior-musical theatre) said.

"It was just interesting to finally see that it's okay to voice our experiences and feel much more secure within my identity, because finally the faculty members know about it."

Lombardo said he and his colleagues began to take "dramatic steps" in an attempt to "decolonize the School of Theatre in terms of curriculum, culture and programming."

He described the "decolonization" as "dismantling white supremacy, examining all of the systems that are in place in the theater world, looking at the playwrights and stories we're putting on stage, how representative we are being for various cultures and communities."

Lombardo listed several initiatives made to address the issues mentioned in the posts and hold faculty and students accountable. The School of Theatre also created a new position — associate director for equity, diversity and inclusion — and appointed associate professor of dance Aquila Kikora Franklin to the role.

"My hope is that if a student experiences that kind of moment with a faculty member or fellow student, and for some reason they're not comfortable in talking to me because of who I am, that they would talk to professor Franklin — because we need to know," Lombardo said.

Franklin spoke with The Daily Collegian but wished to keep her comments off the record.

Lombardo also said he was

looking to create an additional code of conduct to clearly affirm incidents like these would not be acceptable.

In addition, staff were required to attend eight hours of diversity training planned by the school's faculty of color before the fall semester started.

Lombardo said this training included sessions on racial justice, the history of racism in America and Black theater, a session with faculty of color as well as breakout sessions about how to bring "anti-racist practices" to the School of Theatre.

Staff and students were also sent a list of "suggested readings" to provide the community a "shared groundwork in ways to look at race and ethnicity."

Lombardo also said he reminded students the university has a "significant bias reporting system in place" and said students "need to feel comfortable also making a formal report and taking whatever avenue is available to them."

In regards to the university's bias reporting system, School of Theatre student Jalen Martin said many have reported incidents in the past and no actions were taken.

"I don't want to say the [anti-bias policy] is bullcrap, but there have been students who have reported to that and nothing has come of it," Martin (senior-acting) said. "I think that's a very easy way to say 'we're handling it,' but it's not being handled."

Lombardo said he meets with the individuals who have filed a report with him or the Associate Director for EDI, taking "appropriate steps" within the Penn State Student Code of Conduct. He said he intends to hold additional sessions as well.

"I am not certain of the specifics surrounding each of these personal experiences, [so] I can't accurately comment what may have been done, or if the incidents were reported," Lombardo said via email.

Additionally, students expressed concerns about the "diversity training" faculty members participated in. Martin as well as student Alyssa Stanford agreed that staff training is one minor step in a larger, systemic issue.

"I don't really know what they learned in eight hours, and I don't know how much learning you can undo in eight hours," Stanford (sophomore-musical theatre) said.

Alyssa Stanford

sophomore-musical theatre

All of the students interviewed criticized the shows the School of Theatre chooses to produce, as well as the roles given to students of color and casting biases within the school.

Lombardo said he wished to produce different shows to help create a better culture within the School of Theatre. Despite this, many students said problematic shows were still being chosen as productions, citing a recently canceled project: "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992."

The play, originally a one-woman show, normally featured the lead actress portraying multiple different ethnicities. The plan for the production was to "racebend" performers and have them play characters with ethnicities not specific to them.

"You can't, as a white man, try and direct a racebent show written by a Black woman," Jimin Moon, a student in the School of Theatre, said.

A meeting was recently held to discuss and cancel the project, and some students said they found it difficult to communicate with the creative

"To require us to be a human on stage. Our Blackness, of course, would come with that, but it's not a requirement.. We haven't gotten there yet."

Jalen Martin  
Senior-acting

team about why students were opposed to the play.

School of Theatre student Ryaan Farhadi said there was "too much" resistance and pushback from the creative team, even after students emphasized the show was problematic, and they largely did not want to participate in the show.

Farhadi (sophomore-musical theatre) said some higher-ups "needed to do a better job in listening" to the students and singled out Lombardo.

"I have seen him use people of color in power, in my opinion, as more of a means to placate argument than to work through it," Farhadi said.

"To give credit where credit is due, I commend Rick for scrapping the project," Farhadi said. "But the Zoom meeting that the students had with Rick and the creative team for that show was a lot more traumatizing than it needed to be, and I'm okay with saying that."

Farhadi said the Zoom meeting lasted for more than an hour, and it was a cycle of students expressing why the show was problematic and the staff pushing back over their concerns.

Many students of color expressed difficulty with the roles they were casted in. Some students said students of color are often typecast in specific roles that utilize their race as an important part of the character.

Hayes (senior-musical theatre), for example, talked about his experience as a musical theatre student and the songs he was often tasked with singing.

"I walk in a room, and they need me to sing a big gospel song," Hayes said. "They need me to sing all of the big riffs in this musical where it has to be a Black boy."

According to some of the students, these roles can often be mentally draining.

"I've witnessed alumni who were in school with us at the time actually go through mental health challenges because of how neglected and low they felt," Hanner said.

Hanner talked about her experience in a production of "To Kill a Mockingbird."

"I was pushing a racist lady in a wheelchair dressed as a maid, with a maid dress on, and I couldn't say anything," Hanner said about her role in the show. "That was a hard show for me to get through."

Stanford said there is a culture of tokenizing people of color in the school.

"Students in the School of Theatre want to move away from being in a box," Stanford said. "We're done with that. We want to be known for doing roles that don't always have to do with our race. We want to be chosen because we're good at it and we can portray that role."

Martin said students of color want to play characters whose race is not an important part of who they are.

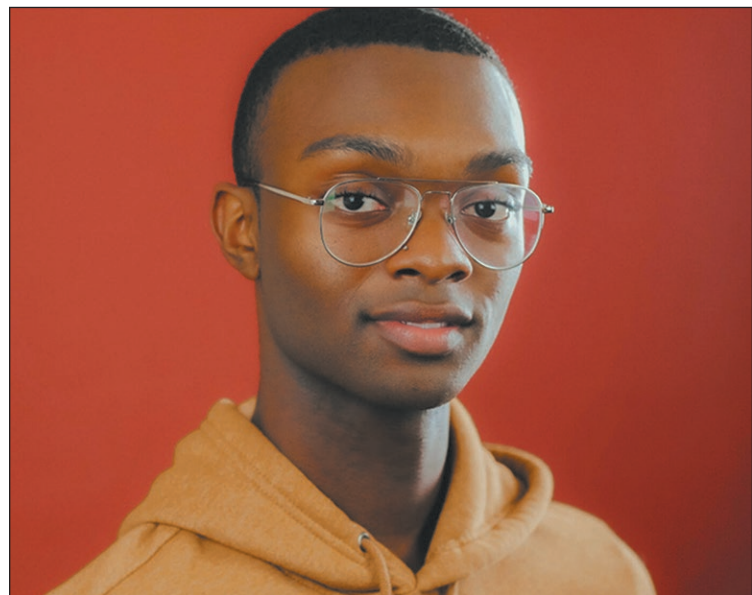
"To just require us to be a human on stage," Martin said. "Our Blackness, of course, would come with that, but it's not a requirement for the character. We haven't gotten there yet."

Hayes said Black students need the same opportunities and chances other white students have.

"We don't have them, frankly," Hayes said. "There's always just one Black show every year. We feel robbed when we get call-backs for a show like Legally Blonde, when we know damn well that we're gonna put us in Caroline, or Change. They need to cast a Black Elle in Legally Blonde, and in roles where we're not usually seen."

Additionally, many of the students felt a significant portion of their issues lay with the foundations of theater in general, which are largely white-dominated and unaccommodating.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



Courtesy of Jalen Martin

Jalen Martin (senior-acting) poses for a headshot.



# New Big Ten coalition has big goals

By Tanyon Loose  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

While individual athletes and coaches may be able to make some impact when speaking out on important issues, no matter how many followers someone has, there's strength in numbers.

This is something Penn State's members of the Big Ten's new Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Coalition know all too well.

In response to recent civil unrest and outrage across the United States and the rest of the world, the Big Ten formed a group to fight against and work toward remedying this injustice.

Named The Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Coalition, the coalition's mission statement reads:

*"We seek to collectively and constructively eliminate racism and hate in our society while creating tangible action within our Universities and surrounding communities using the platforms of empowerment, education, and accountability."*

Penn State's 10 members on the coalition include: Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Sandy Barbour, James Franklin, junior guard Myles Dread, junior defensive tackle PJ Mustipher, junior swimmer Olivia Jack, men's soccer coach Jeff Cook, women's lacrosse coach Missy Doherty, women's basketball coach Carolyn Kieger, swimming and diving coach Tim Murphy and faculty athletics representative Dennis Scanlon.

Six of Penn State's members of the coalition are white, but Dread — one of the coalition's Black members — knew he wanted to get involved from the beginning.



Collegian file photo

Guard Myles Dread practices spinning the ball on his fingers during men's basketball media day in the Bryce Jordan Center on Oct. 16, 2018.

He just didn't think it'd necessarily be with a conference-wide initiative.

"With everything going on and the way the country was moving, I was assuming that people were going to start doing things in their communities," Dread told The Daily Collegian. "I didn't expect the Big Ten, which is such a huge entity, to make such a stand, and I was very happy to be a part of that."

Coaches on the committee have primarily worked to enable their athletes and ensure them the ability to speak out about injustice they, or those around them, have experienced.

"My job is to try and help our guys think through these things, think critically and then find their own voice," Cook told the Collegian.

Kieger also shared a similar sentiment to Cook, but her situation is slightly different.

According to a 2018-19 NCAA demographics survey, the racial and ethnic breakdown of Division I women's basketball was 32% white, 45% Black and 23% other.

The second-year coach shared what her role is as a white coach leading a team in a sport that has more athletes of color than it does white athletes.

Last season in the Big Ten, Kieger's first, she was one of 12 white women's basketball coaches out of 14 in the conference, while only 36% of the conference's women's basketball players were white.

"We have different backgrounds, we have different things that we have to go through. So, in order for me to be an ally for my players and for the Black community or people of color, I have to do my part," Kieger said. "I have to



Photo courtesy of Penn State Athletics

Swimmer Olivia Jack swims breaststroke during an event. Jack is a member of Penn State's delegation to the Big Ten's new Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Coalition and helped found the group Black Student Athletes at Penn State.

do more than just listen. I have to educate myself, and I have to find out ways that I can do more and I can give more back to the community and I can support them."

Cook is also a member of the inclusion subcommittee for the coalition, and has worked to formulate ideas on how to better include athletes who are routinely and systemically marginalized.

Cook has made a point to try and understand the lived experiences of his non-white players.

"I have talked to the players about how it feels when you're a Black student athlete at Penn State.

How do you feel? Do you feel included? Do you feel welcome? Do you have an equal voice?" Cook said.

"I can't really understand or know what it's like to walk in the shoes of a young Black male who's coming to college for the first time from a predominantly Black community for example, like some of our own student athletes have."

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Athletes of all types have a number of factors that weigh on the decisions they make.

However, many opt to use their platform in spite of backlash they may receive.

But, unlike professional athletes, collegiate athletes face potential repercussions from their own institutions, as many fear their standing on a team or with the university may be affected by their words or support for certain causes and movements.

"As a collegiate athlete, there's a lot on the line in terms of our

future in our sport, our education and, in some cases, people's scholarship money that goes into the decision of protesting seasons, protesting practices, opting out, any of those kinds of decisions," Jack told the Collegian.

"It's hard to speak out about our opinions because of the backlash that we might

have. There are times that I have been worried about the things that I say, because I wonder if it'll change a certain person's perspective that might affect my ability to swim at Penn State or still attend Penn State," she added.

Even those at the top of their respective sport are not free from ridicule or scorn for speaking out about police brutality and racial injustice, as star athletes have been told to stick to sports countless times.

Dread countered and pushed back against that notion.

"The people who say 'shut up and dribble' — they don't have a job in politics either," Dread said.

"You see a lot of people with jobs in whatever field saying 'shut up and dribble,' but your job has just as much to do with politics as mine."

It's a notion that comes from a level of hypocrisy and conditional support that has perhaps always been there, but has become amplified in recent months, Jack said.

"I realized especially this year, there's this sort of hypocrisy where fans will support athletes when they're competing the way that fans think they should, or their image is to a fan's certain standards," Jack said.

"But the second an athlete speaks out about something that they believe in or shows any sort of humanity outside of their sport, there seems to be this attitude that those athletes are for fans entertainment only."

Dread's not asking for special treatment.

He, like Jack, is simply asking for people to recognize his humanity, and the fact that his life matters off the basketball court as much as it does on it.

"I'm the same person that you love wearing a jersey as I am when I'm not wearing a jersey. What I believe in is important to me, just as much as basketball is important to me, and my life matters just as much as yours," Dread said.

"I'm not asking for my life to matter more than yours or anyone else's. I just want my life to matter, just as much as everyone else's."

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.

## Washington a career trailblazer

By Andrew Destin  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Coquese Washington became the WNBA Players Association's first president in 1999, the association was in dire straits.

Yearly salaries for players began at around \$5,000, and year-round health insurance was unheard of. Both paid maternity leave and retirement benefits were foreign concepts to the WNBA's Players Association in its early stages.

"We just wanted to make sure that the fight for things would make playing in the WNBA a career and not a side job," Washington told The Daily Collegian. "The conditions that we were playing under made it impossible for this to be a career or profession."

Fast forward 21 years later and the WNBA has become a league where women can play basketball professionally without needing a second job, and the league has become a leader in protesting social injustice.

"In terms of television coverage, in terms of longevity, it's really fantastic," Washington said. "To see the players stepping up and using the platform that they have as professional athletes, and working and fighting for change, it's important."

As president of the Players Association, Washington led negotiations for the WNBA's first collective bargaining agreement, which established minimum salaries, retirement plans, year round health coverage and a maternity policy.

"At the time, it was daunting, because it was a big task," Washington said. "It was also very liberating and enlightening, because I think we knew at the time



Collegian file photo

Coach Coquese Washington talks with players during the game against Iowa held in the Bryce Jordan Center on Feb. 24, 2016.

that this was going to be a league that had a really good chance of surviving for the long haul."

Before coaching at Penn State from 2007-2019 and representing the WNBA in 1999, Washington played collegiately at Notre Dame from 1989-1993, earning her law degree shortly after in 1997.

Upon graduation, Washington played in the now-defunct American Basketball League and then the WNBA, where she navigated a six-year career with three teams.

Looking back on her playing career during the WNBA's infancy, Washington said she and other players laid the groundwork for the association to be where it is today — at the forefront of social justice.

"I think one of the things that we did as pioneers in the league was establish a sense of fighting for what's important," Washington said. "As women, we had to fight for legitimacy, for professionalism. I think that was the foundation for the fight

to be heard."

Washington learned how to fight these battles firsthand during her playing days under legendary Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw.

And those lessons became ones central to her time as a head coach.

"Like coach McGraw did for me, I try to do for [my players]," Washington said. "I view my role as one where I'm helping girls become women, so I want to give them a mentorship that's going to be impactful."

Working with McGraw for over a decade, Washington said she also learned from her how to balance all aspects of her life.

Once she took over at Penn State in 2007, Washington understood how important it was to engage in meaningful discussions and prevent players from living in a "sports bubble."

"We didn't want to live in a vacuum," Washington said.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



Josie Chen/Collegian

Long jumper Audra Koopman holds a megaphone and helps lead a march in State College on Saturday, Sept. 26.

## Athletes ignite change

By Ben Serfass  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Three Penn State student-athletes are doing more than engaging in protests and using their voices to fight for social justice.

Instead, they're leading the charge.

Swimmer Olivia Jack and jumper Audra Koopman have helped start and lead a new organization called Black Student Athletes, aimed at fostering a safe environment for Black athletes to discuss their experiences.

"It's hard to be a Black athlete in the United States of America," Jack said. "Right now it's tough to be a Black person in America."

Meanwhile, Johnasia Cash and the rest of the women's basketball team are trying to "Ignite the Change" — the team's motto this year, and one that signifies making tangible efforts to fight for equality.

Cash, who recently transferred to Penn State from Southern Methodist, was not afraid to let her voice be heard by the members of the

State College community.

"All the athletes talk about the saying 'shut up and dribble,' and I'm not going to do that," Cash said. "I am a strong, independent Black woman, and I believe that our voices deserve to be heard, just as much as anybody."

Cash and the rest of the Lady Lions have started the "Ignite the Change" movement to help make a difference and stand up to racism.

The movement was put in place after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Floyd wore the No. 5 while playing college basketball at then-South Florida Community College, which is the reason the women's basketball team has committed to taking meaningful steps to help spark change in its community on the fifth day of every month.

This commitment to acting, and not just speaking is a part of what resonated strongly with the senior transfer upon her arrival to Happy Valley.

"Coming up to Penn State with 'Ignite the Change,' it seemed really important to them to want to get out there," Cash said.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



# Election Day is November 3.

# Your generation will be the one saddled with climate change, racial injustice, and mountains of student loans.

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