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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Members of the caucuses in favor of the legislation to put three new community representatives in UPUA celebrate the passing of Bill 39-1 during the UPUA meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

By Christina Baker

In 2016, Richardson joined the University Park Undergraduate Assembly as its first-ever Black student representative. He was the first student representative at the university to declare his identity as Black. When he was running for the position, Richardson said that he wanted to be transparent and promote racial inclusivity.

The 14th Assembly was the assembly most dedicated to creating a community representative for the Black community. Richardson said that the assembly was especially focused on creating a representative for the Hispanic community, but that it was also focused on other community representatives.

During the 13th Assembly, the already-existing representatives were generally enthusiastic about the idea. However, they didn’t always extend the same enthusiasm to others. Richardson and Rackers said that they wanted to work with the community to create a representative for the Black community.

Richardson and Rackers, 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, they didn’t always extend the same enthusiasm to others. Richardson and Rackers said that they wanted to work with the community to create a representative for the Black community.

Richardson said that the main goal of the 14th Assembly was to create a representative for the Black community. He said that he was happy with the results of the 14th Assembly, and he said that he was looking forward to the future of the University Park Undergraduate Assembly.

"It was an amazing experience," Richardson said. "I learned a lot from the process, and I’m excited to see what the future holds for the University Park Undergraduate Assembly."
"I don't think you can just lump all of the parts of colonial history and everything that you've been taught about it into one sort of understanding of your current climate, as well."

Executive Director

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Nicole Andrade’s philosophy as president, according to Black Caucus, is that it’s not just a job but also an opportunity to help others, and that that isn’t always an easy task for the leader of a 21-year-old organization that serves a wide, multiracial and diverse community.

Andrade believes that she possesses a strong sense of responsibility to the organization and its members, and that it is her duty to support and empower them. She believes that it is important for leaders to take on these responsibilities and to be willing to put in the time and effort required to make a difference.

Nicole Andrade, president of Latino Caucus, poses for a portrait at Old Main on Oct. 6.

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How racism affects the School of Theatre

By Joshua Chu

On June 28, several posts were made on the School of Theatre’s Instagram page detailing numerous racial interactions that Black students have experienced with the theatre program. Many of these posts detailed interactions with race-based casting decisions, microaggressions, instances of inclusion and role flexibility, and other types of student experiences shared within the School of Theatre community.

Post 1: “Black girl’s hair asking to be touched without her consent”

Post 2: “Students in the School of Theatre want to move away from predominantly white shows. Theatre want to move away from predominantly white shows.”

Post 3: “Many of these posts detailed interactions with race-based casting decisions, microaggressions, instances of inclusion and role flexibility, and other types of student experiences shared within the School of Theatre community.”

Post 4: “In regards to the university’s bias reporting system, School of Theatre student Alana Martin said many have reported incidents in the past and no actions were taken.”

Lombardo, the director of the School of Theatre and actor for director of Penn State Centre Stage, responded to these posts, saying “We’re done with this. We are not going to be known for doing roles that come with that, but it’s not a requirement. We want to be chosen because we’re good at it and we can get through.”

All of the students interviewed said they’ve experienced racism on a daily basis in their theatre experiences and during their performances. "That was a hard show for me to sing all of the big riffs in the musical. It was often tasked with singing. I need to sing a big song gross song. “Hayes said. “I want to sing all of the big riffs in that musical,” she said. "I was a Black boy." Let's go back over our concerns.

Many of these posts detailed interactions with race-based casting decisions, microaggressions, instances of inclusion and role flexibility, and other types of student experiences shared within the School of Theatre community. Lombardo said via email. Additionally, school theatre student Alana Martin said many have reported incidents in the past and no actions were taken.

“Sometimes, it’s maybe going to say the (anti-bias) policy is balky, but it’s not that in the policy is being acted on,” said. "My hope is that if a student doesn’t want to have race in a role, it’s not being handled.”

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“I don’t really know how much learning I have reported to that and nothing has been done, or if the incidents were reported,” said. "We’re done with this. We are not going to be known for doing roles that come with that, but it’s not a requirement. We want to be chosen because we’re good at it and we can get through.”

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**New Big Ten coalition has big goals**

By Tasyen Louise

While individual athletes and coaches may be able to make small impacts when they speak up on important issues, there is strength in numbers. This is why the formation of the Black Student Athletes at Penn State Coalition is so important. The coalition was created to provide a venue for students of color to collectively raise awareness and fight against racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

The words and actions of black athletes are vital, especially in a world where there is a vacuum of real discussions on many of these topics. With the coalition, black athletes have an opportunity to be part of a platform to promote change and advocate for justice.

**Liberating and enlightening**

“IT was also very enlightening,” said Coquese Washington, head coach of Penn State women’s basketball and a member of the coalition. “I think we know at the time that we didn’t have our voices and didn’t have the platform that we do now... I think we got involved from the beginning.”

While a group of black basketball players at Iowa held in the Bryce Jordan Center on Feb. 24, 2016, Washington said she and other advocates wondered whether we could ever break into the conversation. But then another incident happened, and the coalition was created.

**Ignite the Change**

“There are times that I have been worried about the things that I say because I wonder if I’ll change a certain person’s perspective that might affect my ability to exist at Penn State or still play at Penn State,” said Cook. “Even those at the top of their respective sport might not be used to hearing from athletes that are being intolerant of people who believe in or show any sort of experience, but in this community on the fifth day of every month, the coalition is helping to make a difference and stand up to injustices.”

The movement was put in place for athletes to share their voices under the banner of the #IamBlack and #IamPride, which is the reason the coalition has been so successful. It is now its fifth year to be a part of this coalition, with the coalition holding a megaphone and helping lead a group of black athletes to discuss their experiences.

**Athletes ignite change**

By Ben Serfas

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

Swimmer Olivia Jack and two basketball players have helped lead the charge in the coalitions, and have worked to form the group Black Student Athletes at Penn State. The coalition was founded in the wake of 2016's anti-hate and anti-racism protests.

**Listen to the full story**

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**Coach Cupcakes Washington talks with students during the game against Illinois held in the Bryce Jordan Center on Feb. 24, 2016.**

“T he people who say ‘shut up and play’ or ‘staying in a sports bubble’ don’t realize that these things are not in a vacuum,” said Cook. “If you see something that you believe in or shows any sort of injustice they, or those around them, have experienced, you have an equal voice.”

“Do you feel? Do you feel?”

“This is something that I really understand as well because I have been part of the shorts of a young black male athlete, and I really understand it. But the first time from a predominantly white athlete talking about some of our student athletes.”

**You can’t just say ‘I’m the same person that you love wearing a jersey as I am when I’m not wearing a jersey,’ said Cook.**

Lives have started the “Ignite the Change” campaign in their community. Their voices have been told to stick to sports, but the coalition is helping to make a difference and stand up to injustices.

The movement was put in place for athletes to share their voices under the banner of the #IamBlack and #IamPride, which is the reason the coalition has been so successful. It is now its fifth year to be a part of this coalition, with the coalition holding a megaphone and helping lead a group of black athletes to discuss their experiences.

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Election Day is November 3.

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

You can vote on Election Day, you can vote by mail, and in most states you can vote early. Go to VoteAmerica.com/Students to find all the information you need.