



Campus community celebrates Black History Month

Black Student Organization holds events to honor culture, heritage

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In honor of Black History Month, both the Office of Multicultural Programs (OMP) and Black Student Organization (BSO) shared how they celebrate and honor it here on campus.

BSO President Megan Williams believes the organization's role is to celebrate Black History Month.

Every year during Black History Month, BSO organizes events that aim to educate and immerse many people in the community on black culture and history.

BSO always starts Black History Month off with a Soul Food Kickoff.

"Which is just a way in which we rally up the students around campus through food and we tell them about the history of soul food and what it was meant for within family, within the black family. And it's just a good time where we have different food such as baked macaroni and cheese, chicken, greens, sweet potatoes, things like that," Imagine Dempsey, BSO Vice President, said.

At the event, attendees can talk and listen to music.

BSO puts on Gospel Fest which is open to the public.

"Within this year we had two gospel choirs, one was an adult gospel choir and one was a choir that consisted of children. We had praise dance, we had spoken word, we had some solos here and there and we also had a sermon," Dempsey said. "And we also think that during Black History Month it is important to have a place of worship for the black culture on campus. It's something that we don't see ever here."

Another BSO event is the Black History Month Brunch which was changed from a brunch to a dinner in order to avoid conflicting with another organization who was also hosting an

event to celebrate black culture.

"Each year we either have a panel, we invite a speaker, we do an activity with the students and that's something that is open to the entire campus: students, faculty, black, white, whatever race, culture, religion you come from you can attend. We also made it core approved so it can fit into the students curriculum for core especially freshmen," Dempsey said.

BSO also hosted a movie night with the National Society of Black Engineers where they showed Hidden Figures.

"And that's another thing, we like to collaborate with different organizations during the Black History Month that identify within the black culture," Dempsey said.

BSO also tabled in the chapel view lounge during Black History Month and coordinated colors of clothing they would wear throughout the month.

"We did programs sponsored through us, but whatever programs that OMP had themselves we just attended to support. So we just showed up for their events," Dempsey said.

Both BSO and OMP believe that celebrating Black History Month through these events and in

general is important.

"It's a way for our students to feel representation at the university and also realize that there are people that look like them, that think like them and have made marks in this country despite their skin color and that represent them," Dempsey said. "It's something that is needed here especially with the low amount of students, the low representation of black students especially."

When asked about the BSO events, Executive Director of the OMP Byron Martin stated. "Its energizing and life bringing to the people."

Dempsey believes these events wouldn't have been possible without the work of the executive board which consisted of Williams, herself, Treasurer Lauren Walker and Activities Coordinator Jen Stanton.

"We were really busy and we wouldn't be able to do any of the programs without the four of us. It takes a lot of time and effort, budgeting, conversations and just simply asking for people to give up their time to make programs happen," Dempsey said.

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