

# 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](http://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](http://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