

# Black Student Union struggles to find voice

Once-popular Black Student Union has started after a year a half absence but has to overcome obstacles to become the it once was

**in Hurlburt**  
Clackamas Print

Monday, Feb. 12, the 2008 meeting of the Black Student Union was held on campus, only to be canceled minutes after its start due to a lack of attendance. The Black Student Union is new to Clackamas by any means, but it has been defunct for approximately a year and a half. Tony Davis, a counselor at the college, has been trying to revive the club. His efforts, however, have been met with a lack of enthusiasm from students, considering the recent cancellation, is there still an enthusiasm to enable the Black Student Union to once again hold its annual meeting? Davis stated in the winter term catalog, in 2006-2007, that 500 students were enrolled

at Clackamas, 1,813 of whom are full-time. According to the last enrollment management report of the college, taken in 2006, at that time a mere 13.2 percent of students were racial minorities – meaning that an estimated 4,080 individuals were of a racial minority – and 239 were taking a full-time course load.

These numbers are split between Asians and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics.

The percentage of African American students, in particular, is uncertain because the college demographics have changed since the 2006 enrollment report.

The number of black students at Clackamas has risen in the past few years, said Kristin Christophersen, the former adviser of the Black Student Union. In the near future, the school will likely experience an increase in students who are of an ethnic minority, making an absence of interest in the BSU more disheartening.

Apathy toward campus diversity is not a recent development; in fact, it led to the initial decline of the Black Student Union almost two years ago.

According to Kristin Christophersen, the club was set in motion during

the 2003-2004 school year, and the first president was Brendon Campbell. With the direction of Christophersen and Counselor Guadalupe Martinez, Campbell led the group with a charisma that has been unmatched since he left Clackamas.

“He was the first president of the organization and really the impetus for creating the Black Student Union,” Martinez said. “He really rallied the troops.”

Under Campbell’s leadership, the BSU made a list of both long- and short-term goals, including raising funds for a scholarship, networking with other colleges’ BSUs and having a soul-food cookout.

The cookout took place while Campbell was still president, but many of the club’s additional ambitions were eventually forgotten.

Davis aspires for the Black Student Union to become a place where African American students can experience a connection with those around them. He hopes that it will help “break away from the ignorance” that surrounds certain cultures.

Davis’ job in the BSU is simply to advise. Once the group gets rolling again, its members will determine its role within the school and community.

The Black Student Union



Kayla Berge Clackamas Print

Black Student Union Adviser Tony Davis posts information on the diversity board in the Community Center.

will have its next two meetings Feb. 25 and 26 from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Community Center’s Fireside Lounge. The club is not exclusive to

black students; anyone who is interested in the celebration of black culture is welcome to attend.

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## Counseling Center offers assistance

### Nick Kornafel

The Clackamas Print

Having a difficult time with registration, mid-terms or life in general?

Since the college opened in 1966, it has offered students psychiatric help by way of its counselors, who can be found in the Community Center.

Counselor and Co-chair Guadalupe Martinez assists students with dilemmas ranging from money issues to mental health problems.

“They aren’t referred to as patients,” Martinez said. “They’re students seeking help.”

Stress and relationship issues rank among the most common problems for which individuals seek guidance.

Although Martinez is a well-rounded counselor, she specializes in multicultural counseling. Foreign students who have trouble fitting into

American culture may come to her for support.

Martinez has found that the highest number of students visit her and other counselors in the wintertime due to seasonal stress. Finals week is also a particularly emotionally-taxing period.

Clackamas has five full-time counselors, some of whom are by-appointment and, therefore, meet students at designated times. Others are on-call, for individuals who are having a crisis situation and need to speak with someone right away.

Students who have sought counseling at the college don’t seem to be disappointed by the help they have received.

Josh Sanchez consulted Counselor Casey Sims about his struggles to manage stress and, with Sims’ encouragement, was eventually able to determine what classes he should take.

“It was extremely helpful and motivating,” Sanchez said. “I would definitely recommend it for any student.”



Mistymarie Wilks-Salguero Clackamas Print

A student receives advice from Paul Creighton, left, in the Advising Center, located in the Community Center. The college has provided counseling since its opening in 1966.