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## Creating a Space for College Students of Color

at Brown University, 25 years ago, I was detained by campus security for

You see, I'd left my room to go to the bathroom and students. Just a day after the jubiter. As a black student it was al- into a ghost town. ways an unstated expectation that Black students were a small mi- even the head of the country's nority on campus and we were of- trade union movement all came action not seen in a generation. ten seen as interlopers, even after out in support of the students. The admission.

System President Tim Wolfe.

Inspired by the Black Lives ternity party.

was met with rightwing media ridicule,

didn't bring my college ID along. lation at the resignation of Wolfe, al scope of the protest and the I guess I should have known bet- fear of violence turned the campus breadth of the support. Some 115

I was reminded of this incident documenting student experiences with racism around the country.

Missouri students were not souri (Mizzou) over a string of alone. Students at Yale University racist incidents there, culminating were in motion as well in response reports of a "white girls only" fra-

for all, and \$15 minimum wage come. This example of for campus workers - stood in the power of protest solidarity with besieged Mizzou students.

SLOBAL WARMING

Racism on campuses both priattack by the Missouri vate and public is nothing new. Lt. Governor and even Neither is student protest around death threats against the issues affecting their lives.

What is new is the nationcampuses took part in the protests. Many white students, profes- More than 1,000 students gathered Berkeley. It's the kind of student

Ultimately the protests at Mizhashtag #BlackOnCampus began zou and elsewhere are not so much about this administrator or that, as they are about demanding that institutions of higher learning create a space for students of color. It's the same issue we were struggling with years ago.

> When I was detained as a student it was not an isolated inci- lives in East Harlem, New York.

More joined the fight on Nov. dent. Police harassment of black students in particular was combigotry against students of color (which has reached \$1.2 trillion by a few white students, remindservers had said was nationally), free college education ers that to some we were unwel-

ISIS

REPORT

So it was no accident then that graduation rates for black students lagged behind those of our peers. So we organized meetings, issued demands, and protested to make a change, just like students today. Unfortunately little has changed. Black enrollment and graduation rates at Mizzou and colleges around the country are disproportionately low.

Some commentators seem to I justify my presence on campus. sors, community supporters and at the University of California at think these students are protesting because they are young and na ive or involved in an intellectual exercise. But students today - as always - are largely motivated to action by the pressing issues impacting their lives and educations. They are fighting to learn and survive. It's not academic.

> Libero Della Piana is a senior organizer and digital director at Alliance for a Just Society. He



As a first-year student trespassing. In my own

during the past weeks as protests escalated at the University of Misin the ouster of the state university to a racist incident on campus and