

56-R-31

A Resolution to Acknowledge Black History within the Undergraduate Student Government

Rayvon Braziel (for himself, Neveah Hawthorne, Mekateko Mathebula, Kalyn Mullens, and Deondray Radford) introduced the following resolution to the Black Caucus Issues Committee where it passed. Then, to the Steering Committee where it passed, and to the floor where it passed.

* * *

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University; and

Whereas in 1962, the Ohio State Student Senate was created to serve as the legislative and representative branch of the student population at The Ohio State University;¹ and

Whereas in 1967, the Constitution of the Student Senate was revised to establish the offices of the Student Body President, Vice President, Cabinet, and Senate, to be encompassed within an Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government was the immediate successor to the Student Senate, which was consolidated therein;² and

Whereas the year 2022 commemorated the 60th anniversary of the founding of the institution which would become the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas since its inception, the Undergraduate Student Government has had a complicated history with race relations and with the acknowledging of the contributions of Black members therein; and

Whereas the history of, and contributions made by, Black people as they relate to the Undergraduate Student Government, deserves to be highlighted, acknowledged, and celebrated by the aforementioned; and

¹ “USG’s constitution remains unchanged”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 17, 1993

² OSU Profile: Colleen O’Brien

Whereas during the 1972-73 academic school year, Michael R. White served as the first Black Student Body President of the Undergraduate Student Government; receiving a record 13,000 undergraduate votes during that election cycle;³ and

Whereas not a single member of the Ohio State Administration attended White's inauguration;⁴ and

Whereas White has since served in the capacities of administrative assistant to the Cleveland City Council from 1976-1977; a member of the Cleveland City Council representing the Glenville neighborhood from 1976-1984; and State Senator representing the 23rd Senatorial District of Ohio from 1984-1989; and

Whereas White served as the second Black and second longest serving Mayor of the City of Cleveland from 1990-2002; and

Whereas since its inception, the Undergraduate Student Government has been a predominantly white institution; and

Whereas in an early attempt to mitigate this, in 1975, the Black Affairs Program was created as a committee within the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas the goal of the USG Black Affairs Program was to "unify all Black organizations and individuals at Ohio State";⁵ and

Whereas Robert B. Rice served as the Chair of the Undergraduate Student Government Black Affairs Program;⁶ and

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government Black Affairs Program dissolved after the 1975-76 academic school year, and consequently, the enrollment and participation of African American students within the Undergraduate Student Government diminished almost completely; and

Whereas in the 1982-83 academic school year, the Undergraduate Student Government comprised of only three Black students, equating to less than 3% of USG's overall active membership during that year;⁷ and

³ "USG past revived by election", *The Ohio State Lantern*, April 14, 1986

⁴ "USG officers installed", *The Ohio State Lantern*

⁵ "Black Affairs stresses unity", *The Ohio State Lantern*, September 24, 1975

⁶ "Black Affairs to plan fall quarter activities", *The Ohio State Lantern*, October 14, 1975

⁷ "Poor communication holds minority population down", *The Ohio State Lantern*, January 13, 1983

Whereas in the late 1980s, the Undergraduate Student Government began making concerted efforts to increase minority enrollment in the organization; not the least of those being a USG-sponsored “Affirmative Action Day” event in 1987;⁸ and

Whereas at the time of the Affirmative Action Day event, USG contained a membership of one-hundred (100); only six (6) of these members, or 6%, were Black; and

Whereas on November 4, 1987, after a month-long debate, the 20th General Assembly of the Undergraduate Student Government voted 18-6 in support of then University President Edward R. Jennings’ Affirmative Action plan,⁹ which sought to invest \$7 million over the course of five years into the exponential rise of overall recruitment and enrollment of Black students into the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs at The Ohio State University, and to increase the Black student retention rate exponentially over that same duration of time;¹⁰ and

Whereas in 1988, the 20th General Assembly introduced a resolution to form a committee specifically concentrated on increasing Black membership and representation within the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas the resolution which would have formed the Minority Action Committee mentioned heretofore was tabled;¹¹ and

Whereas on February 10, 1988, the Undergraduate Student Government voted to pass a bill allocating \$500 to a minority campus organization hosting Bernice King, the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;¹² and

Whereas on February 17th, the Undergraduate Student Government repealed its \$500 allocation, citing “oversight” as their justification;¹³ and

Whereas this revocation of funds by the Undergraduate Student Government forced the cancellation of Bernice King’s planned speech to the minority students on campus;¹⁴ and

Whereas in the early 1990s, the campus social and political group ACTION, or Afrikans Committed to Improving our Nation, began work with the Undergraduate Student Government

⁸ “USG programs seeks to get blacks involved”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, March 13, 1987

⁹ “USG backs minority plan”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, November 5, 1987

¹⁰ “USG committee divided on Affirmative Action proposal”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, October 30, 1987

¹¹ “USG seeking minorities”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 5, 1988

¹² “No free tuition: USG voter bill defeated 17-10”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 12, 1988

¹³ “USG to re-think sponsorship”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 19, 1988

¹⁴ “Group cancels King speech”, *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 26, 1988

to try to improve conditions for African and African American students enrolled at the university; and

Whereas the ACTION group, in collaboration with the Undergraduate Student Government, successfully lobbied for the consolidation of the Office of Minority Affairs (now the Office of Diversity and Inclusion) in 1992;¹⁵ and

Whereas in 1993, Frederick D. Hall, an African American student majoring in Psychology, who served as the South Campus Area Representative for the Undergraduate Student Government, began lobbying for a proposed Multicultural Center to be created on Ohio State's campus and for USG to endorse and support such efforts;¹⁶ and

Whereas the debate into multiculturalism and the proposed Multicultural Center, and how involved the Undergraduate Student Government should be in either cause, continued throughout the 1990s, with the issue being paramount in the 1994 USG elections;¹⁷ and

Whereas the Student Life Multicultural Center would not be opened until 2001,¹⁸ nearly a decade after the initial proposal for such a center was introduced before the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas in 1995, Keir Gumbs was elected the first African American Speaker of the General Assembly, serving during the duration of the 28th General Assembly; and

Whereas in 1999, Tina Diggs became the first African American woman to run for Student Body President of the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas Diggs served as the Social and Behavioral Sciences Senator in the 32nd General Assembly, during which time, and beyond; she was a tireless advocate for the creation of a diversity senatorial apportioned seat within the General Assembly, and for creating a centralized committee centered on promoting diversity and inclusion within the Undergraduate Student Government as a whole;¹⁹ and

Whereas her concerted efforts lead to the eventual creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee within the Undergraduate Student Government, renamed the Justice and Equity Committee in 2021,²⁰ and which still thrives today; and

¹⁵ "ACTION tells USG changes still needed", *The Ohio State Lantern*, October 16, 1992

¹⁶ "Multicultural center topic of USG debate", *The Ohio State Lantern*, April 1, 1993

¹⁷ "Focus on diversity at USG debate", *The Ohio State Lantern*, March 31, 1994

¹⁸ [Multicultural Center | Our History](#)

¹⁹ "[Students to vote on minority seat](#)", *The Ohio State Lantern*, February 23, 2000

²⁰ 53-R-38, as enrolled by the 53rd General Assembly, April 7, 2021

Whereas Diggs, now Dr. Tina D. Pierce, currently serves as the President of the Undergraduate Student Government Alumni Association, and is the first Black woman to serve in that capacity;²¹ and

Whereas in February 2020, the Undergraduate Student Government failed to acknowledge Black History Month during a meeting which was held in the Frank W. Hale Black Cultural Center; and

Whereas at that time, 6.5% of members of the Undergraduate Student Government identified themselves as Black or African American;²² and

Whereas the percentage of Black members of the senior staff of the Undergraduate Student Government at that time totaled zero; and

Whereas a massive protest organized by Senators Ose Arheghan and Amanyah Paige, both Black members of the 52nd General Assembly; and Destiny Brown, a Black Representative of the Governmental Relations Committee of the Undergraduate Student Government; was held in the Ohio Union Senate Chamber Room during a meeting of the General Assembly to protest the Undergraduate Student Government for its perpetually disproportionate representation of Black people, its rather intermittent regard for issues concerning Black undergraduate students on campus, and to hold the senior staff of the organization accountable for this abominable oversight;²³ and

Whereas this protest was attended by several hundred students, predominantly Black;²⁴ and

Whereas on February 5, 2020, the 52nd General Assembly passed emergency resolution 52-R-21 which called on the Undergraduate Student Government to formally recognize Black History Month in the year, 2020, and to continue to give a formal recognition of Black History Month during every year which would pass from the adoption of that resolution;²⁵ and

Whereas on March 25, 2020, the 52nd General Assembly passed 52-R-30, a resolution which amended the Organizational Bylaws of the Undergraduate Student Government to establish a unified entity that would be known as the Undergraduate Black Caucus comprised of only Black students within the organization;²⁶ and

²¹ [Letter from USGAS President Tina D. Pierce, PhD](#)

²² [USG Demographic Report 2019-2020](#)

²³ [Senior Staff Called to Recognize Black History Month through Emergency Resolution](#)

²⁴ [Students Voice Concerns at Rally, USG Passes Emergency Resolution to Acknowledge Black History Month](#)

²⁵ [52-R-21](#)

²⁶ [52-R-30](#)

Whereas Ose Arheghan served as the first Chair of the Undergraduate Black Caucus during the 2020-21 academic year; and

Whereas Arheghan previously served Legislative Coordinator of the former Diversity and Inclusion Committee during the 52nd General Assembly; and

Whereas during the 2020-21 academic year, Taylor Hill (Academic Affairs), Elizabeth Patterson (Policy), Keji Latio (Student Experience), and Kyla Hurns (Systems and Operations) served as Vice Chairs of the Black Caucus; and Kendra Asiedu served as Community Relations Coordinator; and

Whereas Amanyia Paige became the second Chair of the Undergraduate Black Caucus during the 2021-22 academic year; and

Whereas during the 2021-22 academic year, Alicia Frazier (Academic Affairs), Kendra Aseidu (Community Relations), Derek Moore (Policy), Autumn Staples (Student Experience), and Kyla Hurns (Systems and Operations) served as Vice Chairs of the Black Caucus; and

Whereas Kyla Hurns became the third Chair of the Undergraduate Black Caucus during the 2022-23 academic year;

Whereas during the 2022-23 academic year, Ami Kanu (Academic Affairs), Shauna Burkes (Community Relations), Kaira Mack (Policy), Autumn Staples (Student Experience), and Zion Moss (Systems and Operations) served as Vice Chairs of the Black Caucus; and

Whereas the Black Caucus continues to thrive within the Undergraduate Student Government with a standing membership of over sixty (60) Committee Representatives situated within six committees that are encompassed therein; and

Whereas at present, an approximate 6.6% of members of the Undergraduate Student Government identify as Black or African American; and

Whereas Roaya Higazi served as the Vice Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (now the Justice and Equity Committee) of the Undergraduate Student Government during the 2019-20 academic year;²⁷ and

²⁷ [Roaya Higazi Next USG President, Caleb Hineman Vice President](#), *The Ohio State Lantern*, March 6, 2020

Whereas Higazi was elected the Student Body President of the Undergraduate Student Government in 2020 and served in that capacity during the 2020-21 academic year;²⁸ and

Whereas Higazi was the first African American woman and the second African American person elected to serve as the Student Body President;²⁹ and

Whereas Higazi previously served as Vice Chair of Justice and Equity during the 2019-2020 academic year;

Whereas Higazi garnered over 5,000 votes in an election that had the sixth highest voter turnout in the history of the Undergraduate Student Government;³⁰ and

Whereas Eyako Heh served as Senior Counselor to the Executives during the Higazi-Hineman Administration; and

Whereas Destiny Brown served as Director of Governmental Relations during the Higazi-Hineman Administration; and

Whereas Nuurah Parsons served as Vice Chair of Justice and Equity during the Higazi-Hineman Administration; and

Whereas Baffoa Baffoe-Essilfie became the first Black woman elected to serve as Speaker of the General Assembly in April 2021; and

Whereas Baffoe-Essilfie served previously as the Regional Campus Senator during the 53rd General Assembly; and

Whereas Bobby A. McAlpine became the second African American man elected to serve as Speaker of the General Assembly in January 2022; and

Whereas McAlpine had previously served as a Committee Representative (2020-21) and Legislative Coordinator of the Academic Affairs Committee during the 54th General Assembly; and

Whereas John A. Fuller became the first Black person elected to serve as Parliamentarian of the General Assembly in April 2021; and

²⁸ [Empowering Voices: Inside the unique advocacy of Undergraduate Student Government](#), *BLACK X BOLD*

²⁹ [Seven Questions with Ohio State Student Body President Roaya Higazi](#), *Columbus Monthly*, Oct. 28, 2020

³⁰ [Morrill Scholar elected as Undergraduate Student Government President](#)

Whereas Fuller became the first Black USG representative to serve as the Director of Legislative Affairs of the Ohio Student Government Association in June 2021; and

Whereas Fuller previously served as a Committee Representative (2019-20) and Deputy Director of the Justice and Equity Committee (2020-21); and

Whereas Suhavi T. Salmon-Rekhi became the first Black person elected to serve as the Secretary of the General Assembly in September 2021; and

Whereas the 54th General Assembly was the first general assembly of the Undergraduate Student Government to have all three of its executive officers, those of the Speaker, Parliamentarian, and Secretary; be persons of Black descent; and

Whereas Madison Mason served as a Black Caucus Community Relations Representative (2020-21) and Legislative Coordinator of the Student Affairs Committee during the 54th General Assembly; and

Whereas Julius McIntyre served as a Black Caucus Policy Representative (2020-21) and as the first Legislative Coordinator of the rebranded Justice and Equity Committee during the 54th General Assembly; and

Whereas Sterling Commons (Off-Campus); Anthony Long (South Campus); and Savannah Sockwell (Off-Campus) comprised the Black Senators of the 50th General Assembly; and

Whereas Savannah Sockwell served as Deputy Director (now Legislative Coordinator) of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee during the 51st General Assembly; and

Whereas Ose Arheghan (On-Campus); Roman Lee (Regional Campus); Amanyia Paige (On-Campus); Nuurah Parsons (Social Work); and Andrew Pierce (On-Campus) comprised the Black Senators of the 52nd General Assembly; and

Whereas Mustafa Abubakr (Off-Campus); Greg Carson (Arts and Sciences – Social and Behavioral Sciences); Arnaud Dahourou (Off-Campus); Kira Jones (Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences); Roman Lee (Off-Campus); Andrew Pierce (On-Campus); Amani Samuels (Arts and Sciences – Social and Behavioral Sciences); and Keith Watson (Dentistry) comprised the Black Senators of the 53rd General Assembly; and

Whereas Baffoa Baffoe-Essilfie (Regional Campus); Leah Bronaugh (Social Work); Yondris Ferguson (Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences); John Fuller (Education and Human Ecology); Isaac Guy (Dentistry); Kwame Lartey (Arts & Sciences – Natural & Mathematical Sciences); Madison Mason (On-Campus); Bobby McAlpine (Engineering); Suzan Mchao (Off-

Campus); Julius McIntyre (On-Campus); Chika Nkwocha (Engineering); Stephanie Ogonuwe (On-Campus); and Suhavi Salmon-Rekhi (Public Health) comprised the Black Senators of the 54th General Assembly; and

Whereas Tahj Linton served as Director of Student Affairs during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas Thomas Booker served as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas Kira Jones served as Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director of Allocations during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas Jones served as Chair of the 54th General Assembly Allocations Committee and Legislative Coordinator of the Sustainability and Environmental Affairs Committee during the 53rd General Assembly; and

Whereas Amanda Belmar briefly served as Deputy Chief of Staff during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas Arnaud Dahourou served as Vice Chair of Academic Affairs during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas in March 2022, Andrew B. Pierce, II was elected the second Black male, and the third Black person overall, Student Body President of the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas in March 2022, Shayanna Hinkle-Moore was elected the first African American Vice President of Undergraduate Student Government, constituting the first time a Black President, and their Black running mate were both elected in the history of the organization; and

Whereas in April 2022, Derek Moore was appointed the first African American male Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government; constituting the first time in which two Black men concurrently served in those respective positions; and

Whereas Bobby McAlpine served as the Senior Director of Engagement during the Pierce-Moore Administration; and

Whereas Madison Mason served as the Senior Director of Issues during the Pierce-Moore Administration; and

Whereas Suzan Mchao served as a Senior Counselor to the Executives during the Pierce-Moore Administration; and

Whereas Julius McIntyre served as the Vice Chair of Justice and Equity within the Undergraduate Caucus during the Pierce-Moore Administration; and

Whereas in April 2022, Yondris Ferguson was elected the fourth African American Speaker of the General Assembly, marking the first time in which both the heads of the executive and legislative branches of the Undergraduate Student Government were headed by Black people, and also marking the longest continuous succession of Black leaders within the Collaborative Leadership Team of the organization; and

Whereas in April 2022, Katherine Lovelace was elected the second African American Secretary of the General Assembly, serving in that capacity until July 2022; and

Whereas Yondris Ferguson (Former College of Arts & Sciences – Arts and Humanities), Jonah Gilbert (Former On-Campus), Nigel Gore (Former Off-Campus), Andre Holland (Former Off-Campus), Zoe Lee (Former College of Arts & Sciences – Natural & Mathematical Sciences), Katherine Lovelace (Former College of Arts & Sciences – Natural & Mathematical Sciences), Amani-Poncho Lucas-Holmes (Former College of Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences), Aidan McLaughlin (Former Military/Veteran Emissary), Brayon Miller (Former Public Affairs Former), David Okocha (Former Commuter), Keyanah Peters (College of Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences), Trinity Riley (Former Education & Human Ecology), and Isaac Wilson (Former Engineering Senator) comprised the Black Senators of the 55th General Assembly; and

Whereas Evan Purdie served as an Associate Justice on the Judicial Panel of the Undergraduate Student Government during the Chang-Valerius Administration; and

Whereas Dieynaba Talla served as an Associate Justice on the Judicial Panel of the Undergraduate Student Government during the Pierce-Moore Administration; and

Whereas Bobby McAlpine was elected as Student Body President in March 2023, becoming the third Black man and fourth Black person overall to serve in that role; and

Whereas Madison Mason was elected Student Body Vice President in March 2023, becoming the second Black woman and third Black person overall to be elected to that role; and

Whereas Aidan McLaughlin was elected as Speaker of the 56th General Assembly, becoming the fifth Black person to serve in the role, which he did until July 2023; and

Whereas Djeynaba Talla served as Chief Justice of the Judicial Panel during the McAlpine-Mason Administration; and

Whereas while McAlpine, Mason, McLaughlin, and Talla served in their respective roles, it was the first time the heads of each branch of the Undergraduate Student Government were all filled by Black students; and

Whereas Kyla Hurns served as Chief of Staff during the McAlpine-Mason Administration; and

Whereas Kaira Mack served as Chair of the Undergraduate Black Caucus during the McAlpine-Mason Administration; and

Whereas Julius McIntyre served as Chair of the Undergraduate Caucus during the McAlpine-Mason Administration, becoming the first Black person to be in the role; and

Whereas Rayvon Braziel (Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences), Kwanisha Broomfield (Education & Human Ecology), Nevaeh Hawthorne (College of Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences), Mekateko Mathebula (Black/African/African American Emissary), Kalyn Mullens (Public Affairs), Keyanah Peters (Arts & Sciences – Social & Behavioral Sciences), and Deonray Radford (Arts & Sciences – Natural and Mathematical Sciences) compromised the Black members of the 56th General Assembly; and

Whereas these aforementioned Black members of the Undergraduate Student Government, as well as all former, present, and future Black members of the organization, deserve to be respected, acknowledged, honored, and celebrated by the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas the 53rd General Assembly passed 53-R-27 on March 3, 2021, which resolved to urge the university to formally rename Bricker Hall, a campus administrative building named after a vehement white supremacist; and 53-R-37 on April 7, 2021, which resolved formal support of the passage of the Ohio CROWN Act, which sought to end discrimination in the workplace based on a person's hair; and

Whereas the 54th General Assembly formally opposed Ohio House Bills 322 and 327, which vilified and criminalized the teaching of Critical Race Theory and the history of race and racism in Ohio public schools, in 54-R-11, which was passed on, and also formally condemned all acts of racism at The Ohio State University in 54-R-21, which was passed on February 2022; and

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government passed formal acknowledgements of Black History Month in resolutions *52-R-21*, *53-R-24*, *54-R-21*, and *55-R-23*, which were passed on February 5, 2020, February 3, 2021, February 23, 2022, and February 8, 2023 respectively; and

Whereas the 54th General Assembly passed *54-R-23* on February 23, 2022, which gave a detailed account of Black History within the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas the 55th General Assembly passed *55-R-27*, which gave an updated account of Black History within the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Whereas though its recent reconciliatory legislative history is comforting, mere verbiage cannot adequately express the racism, discrimination, and violence that has been perpetuated by the Undergraduate Student Government against the Black community at The Ohio State University; and

Whereas as such, the collective campus community, in particular, the Black members encompassed therein, and especially those Black members of the Undergraduate Student Government, should have a written record of the history of Black involvement within the Undergraduate Student Government available to them and at their disposal.

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved that this resolution shall serve as a reintroduction of Resolution *54-R-23*, with updates herein to reflect the additional strides in Black History that have been made since the enrollment of the original resolution; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government reckons its complicated history in respect to its treatment of Black and minority members and issues at The Ohio State University; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government formally acknowledges the history of its Black members encompassed therein; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government continues to formally acknowledge the achievements of its Black and minority members; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that this resolution shall serve as an abstract historical document of the history of the Undergraduate Student Government's involvement in Black race relations and in matters of concern to the African American campus population since its inception; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that this resolution shall serve as a perpetual record of the history, deeds, achievements, accomplishments, and strides of the various Black people mentioned herein

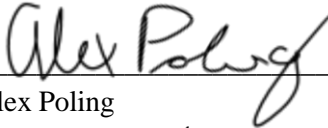
this document during their respective durations within the Undergraduate Student Government, and of those same matters of the many other Black people that have contributed monstrosly to the Undergraduate Student Government since its inception that are not mentioned heretofore; and

Let it Further Be Resolved that this resolution be introduced each year, or so-when needed, until the time of the General Assembly and the Undergraduate Student Government shall cease; with updates within to reflect Black History in the Undergraduate Student Government; and

Let it Finally Be Resolved that, as Black history continues to occur within the Undergraduate Student Government, this organization will preserve such history, and give formal acknowledgement to such history upon its occurring.

Floor Vote: Unanimous Consent

Bobby McAlpine
President



Alex Poling
Speaker of the 56th General Assembly

Date Adopted: February 21st, 2024