Students seek more Black History Month events

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Sociology major Amayia Roach, a senior, in the Neff Hall lobby on Feb. 17

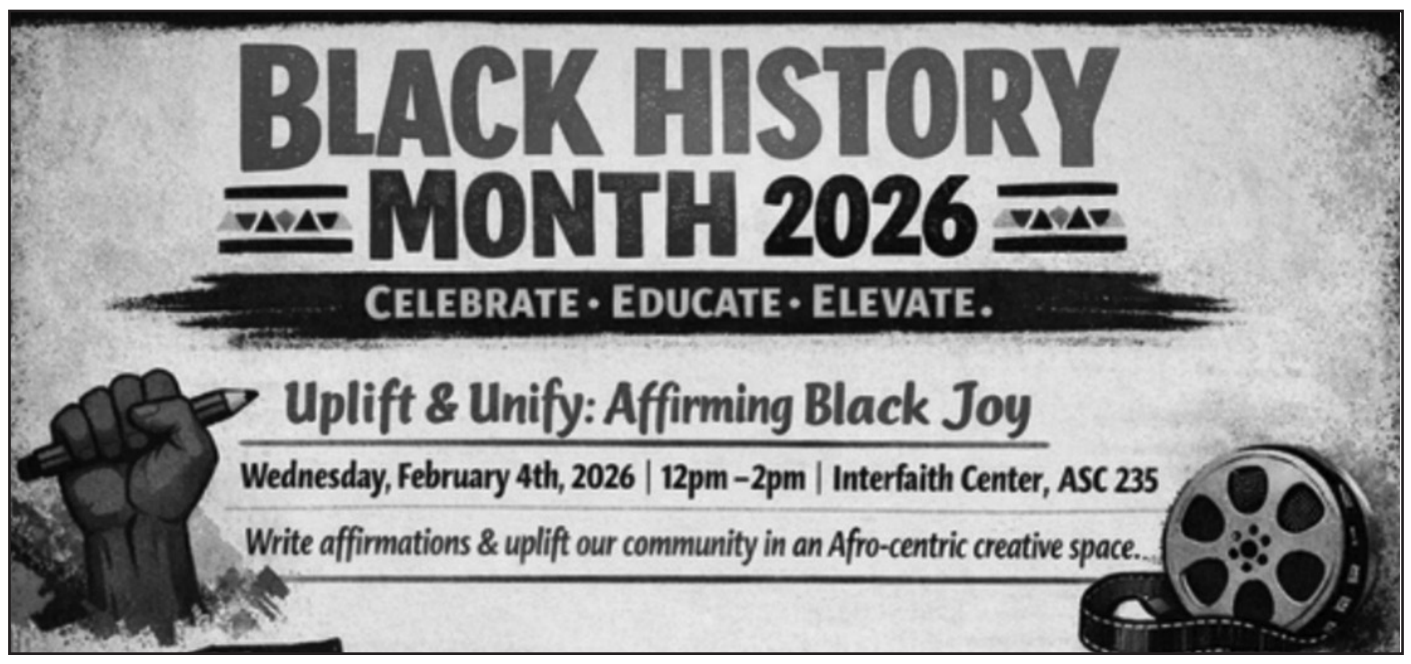

PHOTO | SERGIO PÉREZ

Flyer from the Multicultural Center that shows what events were coordinated to celebrate Black History Month.

Black History Month continues to be a time of reflection, pride and conversation for many college students. However, their reactions to this year's level of celebration on campus reveals a mix of empowerment and frustration.

While students recognize that the month highlights culture and progress, some students believe that the recognition on campus is very minimal.

"I feel like this is a great month. We celebrate people that look like us, and we're finally in the limelight, and the focus is on us," sociology major Amayia Roach, a senior, said.

Roach said the month allows Black students to feel centered and appreciated in spaces where their background and influence are often overlooked.

"I think that a lot of people don't appreciate the culture that we bring and who we are," Roach said.

Roach also stressed the difference between appreciation and appropriation, by emphasizing that their culture should be respected and not rebranded.

"It's one thing to appreciate our culture, but to take it and try to rename it is completely different. If you can't appreciate it, just leave it alone," Roach said.

Roach added that she hopes the month encourages pride among students of color and education for others.

"I hope people of color realize how special they are and how much culture and creativity is within us," Roach said. "I also hope non people of color can celebrate us and get a glimpse of who we are."

Public health and nursing major Mia White, a junior, shared a similar sense of pride and emphasized the educational importance of the month for the entire campus community.

"Black History Month is very empowering and necessary for people of other races to understand the background of African Americans," White said.

White connected the celebration to access to higher education, by noting that Black people were denied admission to many colleges and universities.

"Being able to attend a university is a direct reflection of what our ancestors fought for," White said.

White believes Black students should take an active role in sharing their history.

Not all students felt the month was fully embraced. Communication major Maine Gunzell, a sophomore, questioned why Black history is only highlighted in February.

"The school system shouldn't be trying to separate us by only talking about us for one month," Gunzell said.

Gunzell also said the visibility felt inconsistent, as he mentioned that the momentum of which Black History Month was celebrated did not last throughout the month.

"It was only at the beginning of BHM and then a little at the end. It kind of disappeared in the middle," Gunzell said.

He emphasized that recognition should extend beyond February.

"I feel like we should be appreciated year-round instead of just one month because after February, it's like we just go about our lives, and we just move on to other things," Gunzell said.

Nursing major Karmen Pilgrim, a freshman, also expressed disappointment with the level of visibility and programming on campus.

"The clubs should be involved more because I'm not seeing a lot of events on campus," Pilgrim said.

Pilgrim said decorations in Connecticut Hall alone are not enough to make students feel recognized.

"I don't feel seen," Pilgrim said.

Since this is Pilgrim's first time experiencing Black History Month at the university, she had high expectations and was let down by the outcome.

"I thought there would be tabling events that give out free products for Black hair and more fun events," Pilgrim said.

Although Black History Month remains meaningful and empowering for many, there is a desire from students for stronger programming, broader participation and recognition all year-round.

"It's a good amount of us here, so I would have appreciated more representation," Pilgrim said.

Advising advice for regisration

Continued from Page 2

Due to the Course and Program of Student Eligibility policy, Sinclair recommends that students who are receiving federal aid should speak with their adviser early to determine how a minor fits into their degree plan and available elective space.

As students plan their schedules, Sinclair said it is important for them to include backup options, as course availability can be unpredictable.

"Ideally, you should have six to 10 courses that would all work to complete your schedule," Sinclair said.

This is especially important for students who have not yet reached 60 credits and will be in the last round of selections.

Frustration and anxiety is often associated with the class registration process, as many students have failed to enroll in their desired classes or have experienced malfunctions with the website.

To ease their anxieties, Sinclair offered students advice and resources to help guide them.

For students who have experienced problems with enrolling in required major courses, Sinclair said understanding the full academic map can help to ease their frustration.

"If you are unable to get into a course that your adviser has told you is a must take for you next term, get on the waitlist and reach back out to your adviser for guidance," Sinclair said.

Even though the waitlist is not a guaranteed solution, Sinclair said that it is a temporary hold while students register for one of the alternative courses they discussed with their adviser.

Sinclair recommends becoming familiar with Schedule Planner in order to build potential course combinations in advance and keeping the registration PIN accessible.

Advisers will not provide a PIN on the day of registration if a student has not attended an advising appointment.

Beyond the registration process, Sinclair said many students overlook the importance of building a long-term graduation plan and using general education and elective courses intentionally.

"I think the biggest thing folks don't do is to really build their map to graduation," Sinclair said. "Once you hit 60 credits, you really need to do it."

Sinclair noted that faculty advisors, the professional advising team and the Advising Office can help students explore majors, plan minors and discover coursework that aligns with their academic and career goals.

For students who have not previously particapted in this process before, Sinclair said that visiting OneStop is also helpful.

With careful planning, awareness of registration dates and use of campus resources, students can navigate registration with less anxiety and stay on a clear path to graduation.

University reviews cleanup delays

By Victoria Cruz
News Writer

The university closed for an unprecedented three days in response to Blizzard Calvin bringing in over a foot of snow.

The administrative team had anticipated a Monday closure for the storm. It became apparent on Monday during cleanup efforts that a Tuesday closure would also be necessary.

"Facilities and University Police review the report and check with the surrounding towns and Department of Transportation to check on road conditions around the New Haven area," Eric Lessne, the associate vice president for Capital Budgeting and Facilities Operations, said.

However, the university did not anticipate another closure and was set to open the campus on Feb. 25.

Both departments ultimately came to the decision that another closure would be necessary.

The nine miles of walkways and roads surrounding the campus were still deemed unfit for travel.

"We had not anticipated the third day. We are looking to see what we can do operationally, whether it's buying more equipment or having more contract personnel available," Interim President Sandra Bulmer said.

Bulmer added that although the closure was unexpected, it was essential to protect students, faculty and the staff tasked with clearing the snow.

"It was not feasible to achieve safety for the campus community. It was a difficult decision to cancel, and ultimately it was mine. It was dictated by safety and the health and wellness of our own workforce," Bulmer said.

The facilities team level 1 employees have to report on closures.

These faculty employees are repurposed for snow removal and supplemented by contractors during severe storms.

Contractors were in high demand at this time, making it difficult for the facilities workforce to be supplemented in a timely manner.

A contract workforce is only permitted to work on campus with special permission from campus labor unions.

Once their regulations are satisfied, contract work may commence.

On the second day, the crew was unable to make it to campus because the conditions in the greater campus area were deemed unsafe to drive.

These conditions impacted commuters' ability to make it safe to campus.

Going forward, the university is looking into how to mitigate future extended closures.

"We need to do better. Three days is not what we strive for. We are doing a thorough analysis of where we can improve. We don't want this to happen, and we are disappointed we could not open Wednesday," Bulmer said.

University Provost Julia Irwin shared that the university is still in compliance with necessary classroom hours.

The closure sparked discussion on creating alternatives means to in-person classes during weather emergencies.

"As frustrating as this particular blizzard has been, I think it gives us an opportunity to have some productive conversations around our pivoting capabilities," Irwin said.

The American Association of University Professors and the administrative team have opened discussions around potential considerations that would have to be made.

Exploring if courses could be conducted online or by creating special assignments.

"The driving factor is always safety, all of what we do is so important. But also, we don't want anybody to get hurt. That is something you can't take back. We have to care for each other as a community," Irwin said.

Preparations are currently being set in place to prevent any extended closures in the future.

"Profoundly disappointing for all of us in leadership that we couldn't get the campus open. I think it was the right decision, but I hope we don't have to do that again," Bulmer said.



PHOTO | VICTORIA CRUZ

Interim President Sandra Bulmer and University Provost Julia Irwin being interveiwed via Zoom by news writer, Victoria Cruz on Friday, Feb. 27.



PHOTO | WILLIAM GANGÉ

Students walking to class in front of Morrill Hall parking lot on Feb. 25.