



**BLACK FACULTY AND
STAFF ASSOCIATION**

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*“You must structure
your world so that you
are constantly reminded
of who you are”
Na'im Akbar*

BFSA— The Voice

VOLUME 4_12

JUNE 2015

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Hey Family,

Time flies...or so it seems. It's hard to believe that it has been four years since this organization rededicated itself to making a difference. For the past 4 years the executive committee has worked hard on your behalf to make sure we were keeping folks connected. The website, the newsletter, the list serve, our organizational support of our students through funding and fundraising, and our 501c3 status, (still a work in progress). We've accomplished quite a bit and for that I am thankful. It was a pleasure working with Adrienne, Zahra, Brittany, and Felecia.

As we transition to a new leadership team, please understand and believe that our work is not yet done. I am confident that our new leadership will certainly be a guiding force that will continue to illuminate our presence on the campus, increasing our visibility and viability as a recognized group.

I am also very clear about ways that must be utilized in order for us to continue our success. One of those ways, which I'm sure those of you who have been around me long enough or who have read the newsletter, have constantly heard me say it is important to be actively engaged in the change we want to see. Now is not the time to fit the corporate business model that suggests that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. Imagine what we could/would be like if 100% of the work was done by 100% of the people. After all, what this organization has done and will continue to do is represent the African American/Black community of faculty and staff on this campus.

So I say to each of you, thank you for your support and let's continue to grow and develop ourselves to be of maximum benefit to ourselves and the larger campus community.



Hotep, (peace)

Gerald



SPOTLIGHT : Jamina Ovbude



Jamina Ovbude is new to the “Family” and serves as the primary contact for general inquiries, by phone, email or in-person, at the Office For Global Engagement. She also provides executive level administrative analysis and support to Assistant Vice Chancellor, Dr. Victoria Jones. Just prior to beginning her post at UCI, she spent 4 years living and working in Japan on the JET program where she taught English to high school and elementary students. Beyond teaching, her position allowed her to organize TEDxFukuoka 2014 and serve as the event MC, edit a lifestyle and culture blog called The Refill which featured work from her expat cohort, and lead large-scale seminars training her peers on curriculum development, team-teaching and graphic design.

Being abroad also allowed her to travel through much of South East Asia and fully indulge her wanderlust. In total, she has traveled to over 15 countries and has intentions to double that figure in the next 10 years. She is passionate about exploring the world and hopes to inspire more young people of color to do the same. She also enjoys listening to music, singing, travel chats, fashion and teaching.

She is an alumna of the University of Southern California with Bachelor’s degrees in Communications and Spanish.

Be sure to welcome her when/if you happen to see her out and about the campus. We had occasion to meet as she stopped by the Affinity Group Event last week. It was a pleasure to meet her and I encourage you to do the same.



Health and Wellness

Mental Health Awareness in the Black Community: Key Concepts and Ideas to Know

Posted 5/24/2015 by Chandra White-Cummings, Managing Editor

Maybe perception is being skewed by the swirl of activity surrounding mental health awareness month, but it sure seems like mental health promotion is the latest cause du jour. Celebrities are creating outreaches and nonprofits, like the fantastic campaign,

#Stronger Than Stigma, a collaboration between Bring Change 2 Mind and NY Jets wide receiver Brandon Marshall's Project 375. State and federal governments are targeting mental health prevention and treatment with innovative policy commitments like Mayor Bill de Blasio's \$130 million investment in redirecting persons with mental illness from prison to treatment. With big dollars, big names, and big plans leading the way to change in mental health policy and practice, now's a good time to make sure we lay a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding.

A common awareness of mental health concepts and ideas is vitally important to establish meaningful goals for reform. If mental health and wholeness is the goal then we must know how those terms are being defined in theory and how they manifest in practice. Otherwise, we end up with an untethered movement that wanders aimlessly for decades rather than one anchored by concrete objectives and identifiable strategies. We should all—advocates, consumers, providers, researchers—ask ourselves, “what is mental health anyway?”.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a definition of mental health that's been adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.[i]

In contrast, mental illness is defined as, “collectively all diagnosable mental disorders” or “health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.”[ii]

At the outset, there's a problem. Intuitively it seems that mental health would be the psychological opposite of mental illness. Looking at the explanations of mental health and illness, they don't seem related at all. Mental health focuses on realization of potential through resilience and productivity in one's work and community. Mental illness focuses on mental or behavioral changes connected to stress and/or faulty functioning. The WHO and other organizations attempt to address this oddity by explaining that “mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities”. [iii] It's not uncommon for people to be capable of “working productively” and still operate with altered thinking, mood, or behavior brought about by distress. In fact, the ability of people in the black community to routinely function this way both complicates and informs how mental health should be approached among this population.



As we evaluate what mental health means, several questions are worth asking:

- For African Americans, does good mental health and wellness look the same as for the general population?
- Does it require the same interventions and treatments?
- What role do our experiences play in our patterns of thinking and thought processes? Can/should they be used not just to explain behavior, but to normalize it?

Health and Wellness (cont'd)

Mental Health Awareness in the Black Community: Key Concepts and Ideas to Know

In addition to a common awareness of elements of mental health, it's also helpful to understand risk factors for mental illness. The Mayo Clinic identifies these behaviors and situations as increasing one's risk for mental health problems [iv]:

- Experiences in the womb — for example, having a mother who was exposed to viruses, toxins, drugs or alcohol during pregnancy
- Stressful life situations, such as financial problems, a loved one's death or a divorce
- A chronic medical condition, such as cancer
- Brain damage as a result of a serious injury (traumatic brain injury), such as a violent blow to the head
- Traumatic experiences, such as military combat or being assaulted
- Use of illegal drugs
- Being abused or neglected as a child
- Having few friends or few healthy relationships

Looking at that list, one might easily conclude that just being black in this country predisposes one to mental health problems. It is critical for African Americans to identify protective factors that can help people handle stressors and mitigate risks. The WHO includes these items—and others—as protective factors against mental disorders [v]:

- Reducing economic insecurity
- Improving housing
- Dealing with family disruption
- Reducing risk behavior in schools
- Intervening at the workplace

Contextualized for the black experience, protections that depend on the equitable functioning of systems might need an adaptation that allows for management of internal feelings and perspective about situations as the systems are being reformed. For example, is it legitimate or desirable to allow for a protective factor of “reducing and management of the distressing feelings that accompany economic insecurity”? Obviously, it's not acceptable to excuse inequity and discrimination by simply teaching people to be okay with it, but positively managing emotions can and should be a part of mitigating the harm caused by distressing circumstances.

As individuals and a community we must commit ourselves to the hard work of moving from awareness to understanding to application of mental health issues, continuously striving for health, wholeness, and vitality.



Posted 5/24/2015 by Chandra White-Cummings, Managing Editor

References can be found at <http://www.blackmentalhealthnet.com/mental-health-awareness-in-the-black.aspx?title=Mental+Health+Awareness+in+the+Black+Community%3a+Key+Concepts+and+Ideas+to+Know>

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Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 <i>Black Baccalaureate- 6-8pm Crystal Cove</i>	12	13 <i><u>BB Jazz Concert</u></i>
14	15	16	17 <i>General Membership Mntg.</i>	18 <i><u>Staff Appreciation Luau Party</u></i>	19	20
21 <i>Happy Father's Day</i>	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Special Events:

For additional events or specific event information please click the link of the event or visit the calendar page on our website at <http://sites.uci.edu/bfsa/calendar/>. You can also find out more about what's happening around the OC community by clicking on the links below or visit our Community resources page.

<http://www.100bmoc.org/events/>

<http://www.meetup.com/Black-In-Orange-County/events/73879372/>

Campus and Community Resources

Campus

Black Faculty and Staff Association: <http://sites.uci.edu/bfsa>

http://www.facebook.com/uci.bfsa?ref=tn_tnmn

Cross Cultural Center; <http://www.ccc.uci.edu/>

Employee Assistance: <http://www.cascadecenters.com>

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity: <http://www.oeod.uci.edu/>

Ombudsman: <http://www.ombuds.uci.edu/>

Teaching, Learning, Technology Center: <http://www.tltc.uci.edu/>

Community

NAACP: <http://naacp.org>

OC Black Chamber: <http://ocblackchamber.com>

100 Black Men of Orange County: <http://www.100bmoc.org>

THE Greenlining Institute www.greenlining.org/academy

National Coalition of 100 Black Women of Orange County

<http://www.nc100bwoc.org>

Christ Our Redeemer <http://www.corchurch.org/>

Black In OC http://www.blackinoc.com/Home_Page.php

The Black Market <http://www.theblackmarket.com/index.htm>

-Educational Opportunities - <http://www.MastersDegreeOnline.org/Scholarships/>



The UCI African American Alumni Speaker Series

The Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs implemented a new program series this spring, The UCI African American Alumni Speaker Series. The goals of this series are 3 fold:

Bring successful African America Alumni back to the campus to share their professional careers and experiences since they left the UCI community.

Share their perspectives as an African American students while they were on the UCI campus.

Allow students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to take advantage of the wisdom and knowledge that these professionals bring with them.

In conjunction with the UCI Alumni Association, the series is designed to be intimate in setting allowing an opportunity for the audience to fully engage in a dialogue with our guest speakers. The program format provides 3 30 minute segments.

Share their expertise in a particular area of study.

Share their life as an African American student at UCI and the successes and challenges they faced and overcame.

Questions from the audience.

To date, we have had two African American speakers this spring.

Dr. Samuel Shacks

“A Crooked Path from Commencement to Commencement”



Dr. Ernie Smith

"How Comparative Culture and Comparative Linguistics at UC Irvine influenced my career as Professor of Linguistics, Professor of Medicine and Researcher in the Behavioral & Cognitive Sciences"



Both events were well attended by students, faculty, staff and alumni. These events have provided for opportunities for networking and mentoring as well.

Our series will continue in the fall. If there are any African American Alumni you would like to hear speak during the series, please contact Fred Lipscomb at falipsco@uci.edu or 949-824-7962.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

With all that we have to be thankful for, we have still more to recognize during this time of year. This month, coincidentally with graduation, is also **Father's Day**. It is a time we take time to celebrate and honor our fathers. While I would offer that we should, (and many do), celebrate our father's more frequently, a day has been set aside nationally, to recognize them. I'm not quite sure what folk will do, but whatever it is, take a moment to say thank you. Father's can sometimes appear to be hard and present a persona that is sometimes hard to see through or understand, but trust me, any greeting, recognition, and time spent that comes from the heart means more than you can possibly imagine. It's a simple thing really, when you think about it. How one day can make such a difference in someone's life. They, like are mother's, do/have done their best to provide love for us. They've provided guidance in perhaps ways we didn't understand at the time, but whatever the lessons learned, I believe it was in their hearts to see us, their children be happy. So, on that day, take an extra moment to really stop and think about what your father's have meant, and for those who qualify, what you mean to yours.



To all of the Father's out there...**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO**