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# BSU Leaders Fundraise Scholarship for Black Students

Anna Popp, News Editor

The leaders of the Black Student Union (BSU) have been spending the past several months at Seattle University fundraising to create a scholarship for Black students, both currently enrolled and for future students starting spring quarter. Receiving support from various Seattle U community members, President Adilia Watson and Vice President Tatianah Summers are at the forefront of this student-led scholarship initiative that will provide the first endowed scholarship for Black students on campus.

Fourth-year environmental studies major and president of the BSU, Adilia Watson, is hopeful that they will fundraise their goal of \$200,000, as they are having multiple fundraising events during the month of February, which is Black History Month.

The scholarship money initially came from Venmo donations, where the club raised nearly \$5,000 and additional donations from private donors. With assistance from University Advancement and the Alumni Association, BSU has currently fundraised close to \$70,000.

Watson recently found out in a meeting that Seattle U has officially made the scholarship endowed through a \$50,000 donation, which was made by an anonymous donor through the President's Students in Need Fund.

Natasha Martin, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, elaborated on how the office of Diversity and Inclusion and the university is supporting the scholarship and the BSU.

"It is important to acknowledge the leadership of the Black Student Union (BSU) in this endeavor," Martin said in a written statement. "This is the first endowed scholarship of its type led by students... They are making history at Seattle University, actively moving our institution forward in this truly transformative way."

Watson also emphasized that although Seattle U has been supportive and helpful so far, this project is and will remain a student-led scholarship.

"We don't want Seattle U to take the credit for this huge wake up call," Watson said. "Black students don't have a targeted source of financial aid and we're one of the smallest populations at Seattle U."

The scholarship will be for Black students in the Seattle U community and the BSU is hoping that it will become an endowed scholarship—meaning funding would be available long-term. Watson noted that the goal is for scholarship applications to be based on the overall financial needs for students, not just based on academic-related necessity.



Andrew Mori

“The applications are supposed to be pretty simple and straightforward,” Watson said. “So we want them to demonstrate some kind of financial need, and then we’ll go from there.”

Tatianah Summers, a fourth-year biology student and Vice President of the BSU, is working with Watson to source the money needed to provide the scholarship. Summers noted that while this scholarship will have a positive financial impact for Black students on campus, she is hoping the scholarship will show Black students that they are welcome and wanted on campus.

“This is a scholarship hoping to bring more Black students on campus, and with that rise of Black population, then maybe we can have a greater push towards diversity in the classroom, in our faculty and in the individuals who are higher up making decisions around what our campus looks like,” Summers said. “I’m hoping that this scholarship inspires individuals to strive for diversity, to strive for inclusion and really put the school’s money where their mouth is and see some actions, not just words.”

Martin emphasized the value of the scholarship’s inclusion efforts, especially within the context of Seattle U’s mission statement. Through it, she hopes that future students are able to see diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

“We value who they are and what they bring to our Jesuit educational mission. I hope future students can see that this is a place that is financially accessible to them, supports them if and when ‘life happens,’ but also offers a welcoming and productive climate for their personal and professional growth,” Martin said in a written statement. “As a Jesuit institution dedicated to whole-person education, we believe there is no dichotomy between academic excellence and diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

Summers explained that she has only had one Black professor in her four years at Seattle U and while the university preaches diversity, she feels it has not proven itself to follow through with their promise of a diverse community.

“I’m pre-med and Black representation in healthcare is really low. representation as a whole is something that our community struggles with,” Summers said. “I think that we can see that really clearly at SU.”

Watson and Summers have set Mar. 1 as the goal for raising the \$200,000. They have a variety of ways the community can help support the initiative by that date.

Mighty-O donuts is giving all proceeds of sales from the “Good ol Glaze” donut to the BSU scholarship fund from Feb. 1 to Feb. 28.

The BSU is also hosting a Zoom showcase Feb. 19 that will include vocal performances, art exhibits and a silent auction. There is a suggested donation price of \$10 but they will not turn away anyone attending the event.

Watson added that all are welcome to attend BSU meetings and events to join and show support, prioritizing the needs of Black students first and foremost.

More details can be found on the BSU ConnectSU page. Direct donations to the scholarship fund can also be made here.