

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

---

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

---

5-15-2024

## 2024-05-15 Black Student Union on Overcoming Adversity to Provide A Space for POC Students

Diego Gonzalez  
*Seattle University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

---

### Recommended Citation

Gonzalez, Diego, "2024-05-15 Black Student Union on Overcoming Adversity to Provide A Space for POC Students" (2024). *The Spectator Online*. 1289.

<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/1289>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



The Spectator • May 15, 2024 • <https://seattlespectator.com/2024/05/15/black-student-union-on-overcoming-adversity-to-provide-a-space-for-poc-students/>

# Black Student Union on Overcoming Adversity to Provide A Space for POC Students

Diego Gonzalez, Volunteer Reporter

Born out of the need for community, as well as the urgency to foster a safe space where one can voice concerns, Seattle University's Black Student Union (BSU) was founded in the late 1960s in response to the student civil rights unrest that created the University of Washington's BSU. BSU is a cultural club that seeks to primarily support Black students on campus and provide additional resources that Seattle U may be lacking.

Feeling as though they don't get enough support in comparison to other cultural clubs on campus, the club's officers hope that one day BSU can stand on an equal footing with them. Since BSU has had difficulty with student attendance and backing from Seattle U, the club's endeavors have been inconsistent over the years.

Amber Harris, a fourth-year international studies major, is the current president of BSU. Acknowledging the club's inconsistency, she expressed concern regarding the presence of BSU. Though the club has been organizing events more regularly this year, the future of the club remains uncertain. She hopes that the club will continue hosting events, bi-weekly meetings and retain an active club status after she graduates.

"It's been on and off since [inception]. We don't really get proper support in my opinion. Therefore, we are seen as inconsistent from the school. However, when you have a very low population to begin with there's not really much that we can do," Harris said.

Like many clubs, attendance is BSU's main priority. Alongside having a small demographic of Black students, Harris noted that classes and work are also major contributors to a lack of participation from the campus community. Keeping this in mind, increasing student attendance is a short-term goal that BSU officers have been tasked with.

Téa'yanna Garvey, a third-year anthropology major, is currently the club's social media coordinator and will be the next BSU president. For Garvey, when thinking about how BSU will look in the future, she is mindful of BSU's mission to provide a safe space for Black students to share concerns. The club seeks to support students through dealing with racial issues by various means such as helping them talk to the dean of students or helping students fill out the Campus Climate Report form.



Photo courtesy of Black Student Union

"I would like to say if you see me on campus you should speak to me or speak to any other BSU officers, because I feel like that's really the way we learn about most of the issues on campus," Garvey said. "If you as a Black student have an issue, reach out to the board and we can see how we can support you."

Despite intervals of inactivity, Semaj Gales, a second-year communication and media major, points out the accomplishments the club has seen this year in the face of adversity. Gales was extremely proud of the club's annual showcase held in winter quarter which promoted the talents, ideas and projects of students of color.

While BSU does not currently have a legacy event, Gales hopes that one day in the future the showcase event will achieve the elusive legacy status.

"People will view it as a legacy event with or without the title, and I feel like in any club setting a title really doesn't have significance," Gales said. "I feel like the hard work and the effort you put in to show others how important this event is to your culture and your community makes it the legacy event."

Thinking about BSU in retrospect, Gales stressed the importance of unity and community. Garvey and her alike are both excited to help the club grow, utilizing their experience in other cultural clubs they are a part of. Garvey is the president of the Caribbean and Latin American Student Society (CLASS) and Gales is currently in the process of creating a club that will be launched next year.

"We hope that once you see how BSU is a community for you, that you'll be more comfortable being involved in leadership," Gales said.

In the future, BSU also seeks to collaborate with other Black student clubs such as CLASS and the African Student Association.

BSU holds bi-weekly Wednesday meetings at 5 p.m. in the Intercultural Link, located in room 322 of the Student Center. Additionally, their barbecue event is coming up May 25, in between the Pigott Pavilion and the Library's east plaza. The event will also include field games, free food and community building.

"Come be a part of [BSU] and see what it's about and see if you enjoy it. And if you do, we will accept you for who you are and who you want to become. And we will be more than happy to support you in everything and every endeavor," Gales said.