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# Aggie Black Excellence
## Addressing Anti-Blackness
## Listening Sessions

White Paper | September 2023

**UCDAVIS**
Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion

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# Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction and Purpose

## 1.1 Preamble

This report aims to help set the framework for the next steps to elevate the visibility of Black excellence and address anti-Blackness at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). Though published by the Vice Chancellor's Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), it is intended that the next steps involve bringing together all campus partners and key stakeholders to work collaboratively to move these efforts forward.

## 1.2 Introduction

**Aggie Black Excellence: Addressing Anti-Blackness** is a project under the Institute for Diversity, Equity and Advancement (IDEA), a research center established in October 2020 now known as The IDEA initiative[1] within the Vice Chancellor's Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The Aggie Black Excellence project researches existing and new recruitment, retention, and advancement projects, collaborations, and programs related to African diasporic people at UC Davis in alignment with the campus strategic plan "To Boldly Go" goal #3 and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Vision.[2] This is done through a four-pronged approach: 1) **Research:** Connect research and practice to highlight Black excellence, investigate pressing problems of racial inequity, and identify evidence-based solutions; 2) **Action:** Research, support, and scale-up interventions that establish and expand access to opportunities, increase visibility of scholarship and practice within the African diaspora, and establish campus-wide accountability measures to address the root causes of racial inequity; 4) **Advancement:** Explore research and evidence-based approaches to facilitate the advancement of African diaspora students, faculty, and staff to thrive through the establishment/enhancement of strategic internal and external partnerships; 4) **Dissemination:** Share research results broadly—internally within campus, externally to the broader network of stakeholders, including but not limited to academic, corporate, government, non-profit, and neighboring communities.

From March to June 2022, IDEA conducted seven community listening sessions to better understand the experiences and needs of the African diaspora to address anti-Blackness at UC Davis. Each listening session was dedicated to the following participant demographic groups: undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Collectively, the listening sessions reached approximately 199 participants. In each session, the facilitators asked a variation of the following questions to align with the participant demographics:

1. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational or career pursuits?
2. What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3. What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis?

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[1] IDEA Missions Statement. https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/idea
[2] Aggie Black Excellence. https://idea.ucdavis.edu/aggieblackexcellence

# 2. Prior Reports and Research

The listening sessions utilize the Five Pedagogical Stances (5PS), a theoretical and conceptual framework that allows the IDEA team to holistically approach the experiences of Black students, staff, faculty, and alumni with a racially critical lens focusing on justice and equity (Winn & Winn, 2021). The 5PS are characterized by five pedagogical elements that stem from transformative and restorative justice in education practice: History Matters, Race Matters, Justice Matters, Languages Matter, and Futures Matter. To better understand the landscape of the Black experience at UC Davis, this report focuses on stance #1, History Matters. Considering the following two guided questions, the report identifies prior research, reports, and other information-gathering efforts: "What happened in the past that influences the culture now? What work still needs to be done?" (Winn, 2021, p. 7). In doing so, the report also aims to acknowledge and honor the legacy and work of the UC Davis faculty, staff, and students who have dedicated their time, effort, and resources over the years to address anti-Blackness and create a better climate for the African diaspora community at UC Davis. This report begins with prior information related to the UC Davis Black student experience, followed by that of staff and faculty.

## 2.1 Black Student Experiences at UC Davis

Prior work pertains to the history of undergraduate Black students in California, including UC Davis, other University of California (UC) campuses, California State University campuses (CSU), California community colleges (CCCs), and for-profit colleges (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2019; Contreras et al., 2015; Lewis, 2021). The Campaign for College Opportunity identified four major barriers to Black student success in California's higher education system: college affordability, disproportionate remedial placement of Black students, a sense of belonging on campus, and unequal Black representation in higher education leadership (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2019). To address these barriers, the campaign recommends "closing persistent college preparation, access, and completion gaps," identifying strategic plans to increase enrollment capacity at CSU and UC schools by "providing additional capacity funding," increasing state financial aid for low-income and middle-income students to afford the full cost of college—not just tuition," and creating a welcoming environment for Black students "with a strong sense of belonging" by "increasing the proportion of Black faculty and staff who reflect the experiences of students and recognize their assets and strengths" among many others (p. 34-35).

Two mixed-methods studies on Black undergraduate students further echo this finding. Focusing on African American students in the UC system, Contreras and colleagues (2015) found that low access, limited campus diversity and climate, affordability, and lack of outreach from the UC campuses were factors that influenced their decision to attend or not attend a UC campus, while the students' school context (teachers, counselors, and general resources available at the school) acted as a mediator (2015). The study concluded that UC-admitted African American students were generally highly qualified in their academic achievement and participation yet did not have admission to their priority campuses. Furthermore, students often perceived systemic barriers and a lack of educational infrastructure for Black student success. Echoing the findings from the Campaign for College Opportunity, Contreras and colleagues also marked overall low access to UC admissions, students' concerns about diversity and school climate (e.g., perceiving the college as "unwelcoming" or students being concerned about being the "only Black person"), and insufficient financial aid packages to fund students' full cost of college. The findings further showed that experience with UC recruiter or academic outreach programs (unless the student was involved in college-partnership programs

such as Upward Bound) were minimal, negative, or non-existent and that school resources and access to a formal system of support (teacher and counselors) and access to college information were unequal across the income border despite students' high academic achievement.

Regarding Black student experiences and their decision to not attend UC Davis, Lewis (2021) contextualized Contreras and colleagues' study. By looking at the admitted first-year Black student experiences and rationale for not attending UC Davis, Lewis found similar themes around diversity, representation, campus climate, affordability of college education, the importance of counselors on students' college choice, and a sense of community and belonging. Lewis further emphasized that race and racism, diversity, and representation of Black students, staff, and faculty play a significant part in how Black students may view the university and how they will view themselves as competitive applicants for UC Davis. To address this, Lewis suggested creating more networking and community-building opportunities for Black students, staff, faculty, and alumni at UC Davis and increasing campus investment, commitment to building infrastructures, and implementing accountability measures for Black student success.

Published in 2015, the UC Davis African American Initiative (AAI) Report[3] identified current programs that support underrepresented students in the admissions process and suggests strategies to increase recruitment and yield of African American first-year prospective freshmen and transfer students and the current African American students' retention and persistence at UC Davis. The AAI Report also highlighted Black student activist efforts at UC Davis, including a proposal submitted to campus administrators covering four broad topics: "low graduate rates among African American students, small presence of African American students compared to the overall UC Davis student population, incidents of hate on campus, and the need to decrease attrition and increase persistence and achievement (retention) of African American students" (UC Davis Student Affairs, 2015, p. 13). Based on the recommendations from the AAI Report, the campus refined its strategic retention goals, established the Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS), and partnered with the Linda Frances Alexander Scholars (LFA) program.

The following year in February 2016, Black student activists continued their efforts by gathering on campus outside of Mrak Hall to demand for improved student safety and reiterate their previous concerns—decreasing attrition and increasing retention, graduation rates and representation of the Black students, faculty, and staff at UC Davis. A number of Black staff and faculty joined the student activists in solidarity and support. This student-led activism resulted in an official response letter[4] from Chancellor Katehi, which laid out future actions and accountability for the University to better serve the African diaspora at Davis.

## 2.2 Black Staff & Faculty Experiences at UC Davis

The UC Davis Student Affairs (SA) division launched Lifting Black Voices project in Fall 2020 and immediately began divisional planning meetings to investigate and address anti-Blackness within the Black staff experience. This followed system-wide discussions during the annual UC Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs meeting in Summer 2020. This was the first step of an ongoing process to shape the practices and policies of SA and understand how anti-Blackness shows up in the context of their division. Beyond a conceptual commitment, the Lifting Black Voices set out to make an impact across SA and conducted a division-wide listening tour with their Black staff during Fall 2021 to understand their experiences, from which they identified

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[3] UC Davis Student Affairs, African American Initiative Report 2015.
https://studentaffairs.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk486/files/inline-files/AAI-Report2015.pdf
[4] https://www.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/chancellor-letter-to-african-diaspora-student-community.pdf

the following key priority areas: need for healing; need for support; accountability for non-inclusive actions; transparency in decision-making; career pathways; understanding white supremacy and it's direct connection to anti-Blackness; and staff and supervisor/manager development. That same Fall quarter, DEI's Aggie Black Excellence project identified SA as its first divisional strategic partner and began aligning strategies and efforts with the Lifting Black Voices project based on the insight SA gathered from their staff. The partnership identified the following collaboration opportunities to support Black staff within SA and throughout the Davis campus: increasing academic scholarship around anti-Blackness; actively collecting and sharing data around staff demographic data to identify leverage points to better understand Black staff experience at UC Davis; addressing staff attrition, retention, and hiring; and providing healing and support for Black staff through the Lifting Black Voices Retreat. Additionally, UC Davis Staff Diversity Administrative Advisory Committee (SDAAC)'s previous annual reports[5] from academic years 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 revealed that much of the focus to support Black staff has revolved around building a cross-campus Black staff network through community events such as mixers, luncheons, healing circles, and welcome receptions.[6] Future goals include having more career and professional development-related opportunities such as mentoring, having conversations around racial justice and DEI, and establishing collaborations with different campus entities for community-building.

In February 2020, the Faculty Retention and Inclusive Excellence Networks–Designing Solutions (FRIENDS) initiative convened to gather associate professors at UC Davis to examine faculty diversity and their experiences.[7] Throughout a year-long inquiry which culminated with a recorded public presentation in April 2021,[8] participating faculty were invited to "join working groups involved in design thinking to remove barriers for underrepresented and/or marginalized faculty to thrive in our institution" (UC Davis Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, n.d.). FRIENDS recognized the "invisible" labor carried by minority faculty, a need for faculty mentorship in faculty career advancement, and a necessity for a healthy campus climate and academic culture. Campus climate and concerns surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion appeared frequently, and faculty members noted the importance of long-term support for post-tenure success.[9]

While prior work and reports help understand the intersection of UC Davis Black undergraduate students, staff, and faculty experiences and efforts to anti-Blackness, little was found about Black graduate student and alumni experiences at Davis.

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[5] Every year, SDAAC publishes an annual report featuring subcommittees (e.g., Affirmative Action subcommittee, Research subcommittee, Hiring & Recruitment Practices subcommittee, Communications subcommittee, and Training & Development subcommittee) and constituent group executive summaries (e.g., African American Faculty and Staff Association, Asian Pacific American Systemwide Alliance, Chancellor's Committee on LGBTQIA+ Communities, and Latinx Staff & Faculty Association).

[6] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/staff-diversity-administrative-advisory-committee-sdaac

[7] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/friends

[8] FRIENDS Presentation, April 5, 2021. https://youtu.be/NQNYGmYc1OU

[9] FRIENDS—Team Lemon's recommendation: post-tenure paradigm shift from tenure as an "end goal" to a foundational model of long-term support for post-tenure success of professors. https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/FRIENDS_Lemon_PromotionFull_Presentation.pdf

# 3. Our Approach

## 3.1 Setting and Context

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the UC Davis community sheltered in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The next academic year, the IDEA team conducted seven community listening sessions between March and June 2022. This was a unique time when students, staff, and faculty were returning to the campus, to their offices, and resuming in-person classes with fewer restrictions and eventually less frequent mandatory COVID-19 testing.

While UC Davis serves a diverse body of students and staff, the Black or African American identifying population at UC Davis is still fairly small. Currently, 5% of Californians are Black.[10] Based on the administrative data collected by the University of California and UC Davis in the Fall of the 2021-2022 Academic Year:

- Out of 31,657 total undergraduate students, 3.8% (nearly 1,200 students) identified as Black or African American (Appendix B, Figure 1)
- Out of 8,280 total graduate students, 4.2% (nearly 350 students) identified as Black or African American (Appendix B, Figure 2)
- Out of 20,346 total staff at both UC Davis Health and the main campus, 6.9% (nearly 1,400 staff) identified as Black or African American (Appendix B, Figure 3)
- Out of 4,731 total academics in both UC Davis Health and the main campus, 2.1% (nearly 100 academics) identified as Black or African American (Appendix B, Figure 4)
- 2.5% of the total ladder-rank or equivalent faculty at UC Davis identified as Black or African American (Appendix B, Figure 5)

## 3.2 Listening Sessions

Community listening sessions allowed the IDEA team to gather meaningful community feedback while maintaining a format similar to focus groups. The objective was to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for semi-formal community conversations rather than formal interviews that assume researcher-participant relationships. This method allowed participants to share their personal experiences, narratives, and observations with a degree of rapport and trust.[11] The IDEA team partnered with SA, Graduate Studies, Black Graduate and Professional Students Association (BGPSA), Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS), Staff Diversity Administrative Advisory Committee (SDAAC), Staff Assembly, African American Staff and Faculty Association (AAFSA), and African and African American Alumni Association (5A). The partners served as co-sponsors, thought partners, breakout session facilitators, and notetakers. The partners also assisted with community outreach and participation. A total of seven listening sessions were hosted virtually on Zoom or in person for approximately 90 minutes (Tables 1 and 2).

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[10] https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-population/#:~:text=No%20race%20or%20ethnic%20group,according%20to%20the%202020%20Census.
[11] https://www.ohsu.edu/university-center-excellence-development-disability/community-listening-sessions

**Table 1** *Aggie Black Excellence Campus Co-sponsors*

|    | Session | Co-sponsors |
|----|---------|-------------|
| 1. | Staff Session 1* | The African American Staff and Faculty Association (AAFSA) |
| 2. | Staff Session 2** | The African American Staff and Faculty Association (AAFSA), Staff Diversity Administrative Advisory Committee (SDAAC), Staff Assembly |
| 3. | Student Session 1* | The Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS) |
| 4. | Student Session 2** | Student Life in the Division of Student Affairs |
| 5. | Faculty Session | N/A |
| 6. | Graduate Student Session | UC Davis Graduate Studies, and by the Black Graduate and Professional Students Association (BGPSA) |
| 7. | Alumni Session | African and African American Alumni Association (5A) at UC Davis |

*Focused on hearing directly from the African diaspora.*
**Focused on hearing from individuals who identified as part of the African diaspora and others who did not.*

**Table 2** *Aggie Black Excellence Listening Session Attendance*

|    | Session | Registrants | Attendees | Breakout Groups |
|----|---------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. | Staff Session 1*^ | 60 | 49 | 5 |
| 2. | Staff Session 2**^ | 138 | 92 | 8 |
| 3. | Student Session 1* | 25 | 19 | 3 |
| 4. | Student Session 2** | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| 5. | Faculty Session | 13 | 11 | 2 |
| 6. | Graduate Student Session | 25 | 15 | 2 |
| 7. | Alumni Session | 11 | 8 | 1 |
|    |         |             | **~199 TOTAL** |             |

*Focused on hearing directly from the African diaspora.*
**Focused on hearing from individuals who identified as part of the African diaspora and others who did not.*
*^During staff session 1, five participants were in the Zoom meeting for less than 10 minutes. During staff session 2, eight participants were in the Zoom meeting for less than 10 minutes.*

Each listening session introduced the purpose, importance, and aim of the Aggie Black Excellence project and an overview of the discussion questions. For virtual sessions on Zoom, participants were invited to share their thoughts in one or more of the following ways: verbally during the group discussions, by typing comments in Zoom chat, or by posting on a Jamboard online platform.[12] In-person locations were Walker Hall for the graduate student session, the Student Community Center (SCC)'s MultiPurpose Room (MPR) for undergraduate student sessions, and the International House (off-campus) for the faculty session.

In each session, the facilitators asked variations of the following questions to suit different participant demographics:***

1. Goal #3 of the UC Davis Strategic Plan "To Boldly Go" is to "Embrace diversity, practice inclusive excellence and strive for equity. Make UC Davis a place of excellence for learning and working by supporting a culture that values the contributions and aspirations of all our students, staff, and faculty; promotes wellness and a culture of sustainability; and cultivates the open interchange of ideas."[13] Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational or professional pursuits?
2. What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3. What research or actions do you think are effective, or what would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black students at UC Davis?
   ***See Appendix D for all variations of questions for each session.

The listening sessions used a peer-to-peer approach to foster a safe environment. Students were assigned as facilitators for student sessions, staff were assigned as facilitators for staff sessions, and so forth with one exception. The second undergraduate listening session had a small group. To maximize student participation and focus on their feedback, the session was facilitated by a Black staff member well-versed in supporting undergraduate students, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). A graduate student researcher, UC Davis staff, undergraduate students, and graduate student volunteers collected participant responses throughout the sessions. All volunteers were trained before each listening session. As peer facilitators moderated the conversations, notetakers took extensive notes throughout the session, which were later reviewed and coded by the IDEA team for further analysis.

Since reflection processes can be traumatic and emotionally triggering, community counselors and licensed professionals from the Student Health and Counseling Services office, alongside CADSS staff, joined to provide additional support during the undergraduate listening sessions. For details on methodology and analysis, refer to Appendix C.

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[12] Jamboard is an online interactive "digital whiteboard" where participants can share their thoughts in real time. https://support.google.com/jamboard/answer/7424836?hl=en
[13] https://leadership.ucdavis.edu/strategic-plan/goal-3

# 4. Findings

Listening sessions identified four major overarching themes: (1) Communication, Information and Accountability; (2) Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging; (3) Recruitment, Retention and Advancement; and (4) Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility.

Communication, Information and Accountability

Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

Recruitment, Retention and Advancement

Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

Within these four major themes are subthemes based on the alignment shared by each participant category of staff, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni. Table 3 provides an outline of the overarching themes and subthemes. The findings section expounds the details of what listening session participants shared by each participant category.

**Table 3**

*Aggie Black Excellence Listening Sessions Themes*

| Group | Communication & Information | Community, Climate & Sense of Belonging | Recruitment, Retention & Advancement | Uplifting Black Culture & Visibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.1 Staff** | 4.1.1 Communication, Data and Accountability | 4.1.5 Networking and Community Spaces | 4.1.9 Improving Recruitment and Addressing Challenges to Retention | 4.1.16 Lack of Diversity |
| | 4.1.2 Increased Accountability for Leadership and DEI | 4.1.6 Microaggressions and Stereotypes | 4.1.10 Lack of Career Path, Career Pipeline and Career Advancement Opportunities | 4.1.17 Achieving Excellence through Personal Attitudes, Self-Promotion and Individual Efforts |
| | 4.1.3 More Institutional Support for DEI | 4.1.7 Diversity Training in Shaping the Workplace Climate | 4.1.11 Mentorship | 4.1.18 Lack of Representation and Sense of Belonging |
| | 4.1.4 Institutional Support in Achieving Aggie Black Excellence | 4.1.8 Workplace Climate: Fear of Retaliation and Psychological Well-Being | 4.1.12 Professional Development | |
| | | | 4.1.13 Pressure to Work "Twice as Hard" | |
| | | | 4.1.14 Observing Inequality and Discrimination in the Workplace | |
| | | | 4.1.15 Supportive Supervisors and Colleagues | |
| **4.2 Faculty** | | 4.2.1 Supportive Community and Networking | 4.2.2 Added Pressure on Black Faculty | 4.2.6 Black Representation and Feelings of Isolation |
| | | | 4.2.3 Institutional Barriers and Overall Lack of Institutional Support | 4.2.7 The Invisible Labor: Emotional Labor and Graduate Student Advising |
| | | | 4.2.4 Mentoring and Guidance in Navigating the Academic Career | |
| | | | 4.2.5 Attracting Black Faculty | |
| **4.3 Under-graduate Students** | 4.3.1 Greater Investment in Efforts that Work | 4.3.3 Organizations and Identity-Based Transitional Support | 4.3.9 UCD as a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) | 4.3.12 Uplifting Black Culture through Institutional Change |
| | 4.3.2 Accessing Information | 4.3.4 Black Spaces | 4.3.10 Tokenization and Hypervisibility | 4.3.13 Diversity Curriculum, Training and Awareness |
| | | 4.3.5 Greater Connections: Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students and Peers | 4.3.11 Invisible Labor and Student Attrition | |
| | | 4.3.6 Microaggression | | |
| | | 4.3.7 Imposter Syndrome and Deficit Thinking | | |
| | | 4.3.8 City of Davis and Physical Safety | | |
| **4.4 Graduate Students** | | 4.4.1 Microaggressions and Anti-Blackness in Academia | 4.4.3 Recruitment and Retention | 4.4.4 Hypervisibility and Invisibility |
| | | 4.4.2 Community and Safe Spaces | | |
| **4.5 Alumni** | | 4.5.1 Isolation and the Importance of Community and Networks | | 4.5.3 Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility |
| | | 4.5.2 Black Family Day (BFD) | | |

# 4.1 Staff

The staff listening sessions were held virtually and included breakout groups to increase accessibility and maximize participation. The first session targeted African diasporic/Black-identifying staff, and the second session focused on insights from staff of all backgrounds. This section summarizes and categorizes their responses into four major overarching themes and their subthemes.

## Communication and Information

### 4.1.1 Communication, Data and Accountability

Staff often expressed frustration with the need for change and research to provide them with data about the university workforce, such as staff demographics and salaries, and expressed an urgency for the university to make data sharing more accessible to increase transparency in the university workforce. Specifically, they expressed a need for recruitment, retention, and advancement research on Black staff at UC Davis, including information on applicant demographics (whether Black-identifying people are applying) and interviewee demographics (how many are being selected for interviews). Other factors included detailed information on staff salary, retention rates, exit interviews, and faculty tenure, all "broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender for staff" to serve as an accountability measure for progress toward a more equitable workplace. Participants stated that conducting and sharing such research was "helpful to see how far we've come" in achieving workforce diversity and equity at UC Davis. They added, "[with] more transparency with the data of where we are now […] we can be strategic with how [to] improve." A participant expressed that they would like "more transparency in the HR process in reflecting DEI," as other participants provided further examples of what they felt was missing and what was needed to support greater transparency:

> "[We need to] look at the data as we think about recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black staff. What does the data tell us about where we stand with recruitment? Where are people located? Where are people in the hierarchy of management positions? Are folks staying or leaving? What specific units or departments are they leaving or staying in? What does that look like, and what are the trends? I think it's important to understand what we look like and what the trends are in how folks are advancing or not advancing."

### 4.1.2 Increased Accountability for Leadership and DEI

> " *"How can we hold leadership accountable? [They] show five ways they are implementing DEI on their teams. Most are passive: reading things and going to training. How do you track the integration into a daily lifestyle?"* "

Staff expressed a need for accountability to support DEI at UC Davis. For example, they wanted to see an institution-wide communication that prioritizes addressing discrimination and anti-Blackness, along with increased support, accountability, and communication of DEI expectations throughout the campus. Others suggested further integration of DEI measures in the performance review process, such as implementing "360-degree reviews beyond the anonymous Staff Experience Survey" and providing employees the opportunity to do a "performance evaluation of their supervisors" in a safer space to "provide supervisor feedback." Others

suggested asking for a diversity statement for their applicants, "whether they are aware of the topic" and "how they will incorporate it into their work and practice," adding that doing so may help "build a culture where colleagues can hold each other accountable and help each other." A staff member suggested giving "negative consequences for departments with DEI complaints" to "make departments more accountable for their cultures." Additionally, others stated that accountability is challenging due to relevant data being withheld, making race and gender-based salary inequity and discriminatory hiring practices more difficult to tackle. To address this, some suggested 1) increasing transparency via sharing an analysis of such data in an annual report, 2) providing a campus-wide standard for accountability for different departments and instructions to do so, and 3) encouraging DEI training participants to share their action plans and implementation progress to keep themselves accountable.

### 4.1.3 More Institutional Support for DEI

Participants expressed a need for institutional support for DEI, including "protected time for people to participate in [DEI] programs and groups without risk of losing their job and/or made to feel guilty" and making DEI work "paid work" instead of "volunteer work" to create a formal form of support. Others commented that institutions should support DEI by having more conversations around DEI, training, and putting in more money and resources. A participant responded that the institution should encourage DEI "not as a requirement, but a culture and value that everyone holds and practices," a "lifestyle" rather than a checklist. As an example, another participant recalled "ally statements being published following George Floyd" by departments and described how some campus departments thought they were done with their efforts to further DEI once they issued a public statement. In addition, while a participant shared that they had a protected time to engage in DEI work, they noted that typical DEI work is an "unpaid labor." Another participant shared that they were glad to see "more DEI questions in interviews" yet observed "different levels of DEI expectations… by position or departments." Similar to the previous comment by other staff, this participant mentioned that "[DEI is] expected, but [we are] not allocated time to do DEI work as part of our time."

Participants also commented on the need for direct, targeted institutional assistance and funding for Black staff development because "not all departments have the money" to support their professional development. Suggestions like "more resources and money" and increased "intentional collaborations across departments" (e.g., UCD Health, the main campus, or between the departments) were common. Others expressed that "uniformity across the board between two enterprises" would be helpful to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black staff and scholars at UC Davis.

### 4.1.4 Institutional Support in Achieving Aggie Black Excellence

Staff shared that UC Davis's "tuition discounts" for staff and "access to funding and opportunities" for professional development helped them to achieve excellence at UC Davis. Yet, the listening sessions revealed that staff do not have equal accessibility to such information and resources, which may leave some to "figure things out themselves." Overall, while some support is provided by the institution, participants commented that more support is needed in funding and mentoring for Black professionals: "I would love it if there could be coaches to guide Black people to advance with specific steps, get benefits, get proper merit reviews and salary increases…networking channels that are connected to real opportunities." Another participant suggested that the university should be more intentional in supporting Black professionals by leveraging data.

## Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

> " *"The city and campus should be intentional about creating spaces for EVERY DAY BLACK JOY! People need community and positivity."*
>
> *"People in high positions even asked where the Black community was, once they got to UC Davis."* "

**4.1.5 Networking and Community Spaces**

Many staff participants expressed that network, community spaces, and committees were places where they can "share similar experiences" and were tools that assist their successful career development. Connecting with people outside of their department, finding communities of people who can promote growth, and being in "safe spaces and events to give and receive good feedback" were some examples. Many staff indicated that they networked in and outside their department by their active involvement in professional organizations, campus committees, and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) such as the AAFSA, the Staff Assembly, and SDAAC. They attributed their success and support to these networks and communities. Staff highlighted other helpful engagement opportunities provided by UC Davis, such as DEI committees in departments, Administrative Management Group (ADMAN), Proshare, UC Women's Initiative, Student Affairs networks and affinity groups, along with other campus initiatives and outreach programs that people volunteered for. Staff often noted that involvement in committees "increased the opportunity to have a voice in decision-making processes" and network with broad community of peers to collaborate, strategize, and commiserate with in times of struggle.

Staff also shared different ways to network and build a professional community in their career. These ranged from informal interactions like "walking around, visiting other offices" to more formal channels such as attending conferences and meeting "professional peers" whom they can identify with. One staff member emphasized the value of such a community which allowed them to find others with shared lived experiences. Furthermore, another staff member shared how these networks allowed them to get the "inside scoop" or more information about the "culture of units" and departments to help them navigate their workplace.

While some staff expressed that ERGs such as AAFSA helped them achieve excellence, others shared mixed feelings about two specific challenges: the time demand, burnout and the lack of power to make change. Several participants worried that committees could put too much work, pressure and time demands on the committee members, thus contributing to a "burnout" among Black staff: "Committees can do a lot of work but are unable to change policies because once it gets to the person who has the power, it can sit on a desk for months and years. We are trying to solve problems we are not creating." Participants left similar comments on the Jamboard that they felt a "burnout due to responsibility being on ERGs and committees instead of the actual institution." Another participant also indicated that people relied on ERGs and committees to "do the work." Nonetheless, most agreed that being active in these spaces and leveraging other professional development workshops broadly significantly has positively influenced their engagement in helping shift the work climate:

> *"The existing practice of having a community (AAFSA) adds value to both life and career."*
> *"[Making] an action plan and [meeting] with like-minded people is tremendous."*

*"[The 'Race Matters' workshop helped] all managers to understand inequity in the hiring practices."*
*"Speaking with and networking with people at different levels has helped so we can get something going and not just sit on our hands."*

Staff described that community-building and networking opportunities were not readily accessible. As a Black community, they have to find opportunities on their own while their White peers are sponsored to attend training. In cases where a professional is disconnected from such a community, participants felt "siloed in [their] individual department [as the] only Black person." While a staff member mentioned that there are "Black leaders and policies to help keep the momentum forward and speak on [Black staff's] behalf," the limited visibility and silence within campus workplaces remain. Participants consistently expressed their frustrations with the isolation Black staff experienced and the lack of Black visibility on campus.

Throughout the listening sessions, participants made several suggestions to support the diaspora's community-building and networking. These included hiring faculty in cohorts, connecting groups and departments with fellowships, creating more networking and mentorship opportunities for minoritized students and actively reaching out to new staff. Additionally, they suggested the following to foster a sense of belonging: 1) making a list of groups, committees, and opportunities for community building and making them available upon hiring and recruitment, 2) creating "safe spaces to talk through DEI-related matters…[a space where people can feel] ok with being vulnerable," 3) providing "protected time and encouragement to participate in education or community building activities" because staff "often feel rushed or guilty for taking time for themselves at work" to build community and 4) increasing "staff outreach" and staff appreciation as a means of building community and fostering a sense of belonging by providing.

One participant—who did not identify as African American—pointed that the listening session was an example of a strategy to help address anti-Blackness: "Hearing personal stories and experiences in this forum is something we can all take back to our departments to have a better understanding of our Black colleagues." Others suggested having "more opportunities for lists and awards to acknowledge accomplishments and contributions" to celebrate the excellence in the African American/African diaspora.

**4.1.6 Microaggressions and Stereotypes**

> " *"I believe that being Black and being a woman has been difficult for advancement in my career."*
>
> *"Others' thoughts and feelings prevented me from expressing myself…supervisor made comments about [my] new hairstyle."* "

Listening session participants described how microaggressions, stereotypes, and discrimination greatly hindered community-building, a healthy workplace climate, and a sense of belonging for Black staff. They felt their Black/African culture, such as dress, hair, and language, was valued and judged differently which caused them "hesitancy to be [their] authentic Black self." They described how discrimination permeated Black staff's everyday interactions with peers and impeded their ability to advance in their career at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. These included sanctions for speaking up, pushback against the ideas of Black staff and limited and unequal ranges in pay and compensation. Participants frequently shared that the advancement of Black staff was not always prioritized and described how overt forms of discrimination persisted in daily hiring,

pay, and promotion practices. Several Black staff indicated that despite their qualifications, there appeared to be a refusal to hire them for positions they applied to at UC Davis. They also felt that the voices of Black employees were not prioritized. Other barriers to career advancement that were identified include lack of promotion or recognition for work, biases, favoritism, and lack of representation in leadership.

The intersectionality of race and gender exacerbated experiences of discrimination and bias for Black women in particular. A participant observed that "a Black female colleague who is honest [and] speaks truth to power was noted as unprofessional in her performance review." Other Black women recalled their direct experiences:

> *"As a Black woman, I feel like I get more grief. People question if I know what I am talking about [saying] 'are you sure you're right?'"*
> *"When calling things out as nicely as possible, you get marked as a disruptive, angry Black woman. [I've] been seen as wanting to disrupt the status quo."*

Similarly, when being their "authentic Black self" some staff faced discriminatory comments and attitudes by supervisors, and were challenged with negative labels such as being the "angry Black man/woman," "aggressive or loud," "bossy," "questioning," or "demanding." Participants also identified unique challenges for Black male-identified staff. Regardless of whether they identified as a member of the African diaspora, multiple people recalled instances where Black men were bypassed for opportunities and stereotyped.

> *"[There is a] reluctance to give Black male applicants serious consideration for certain positions."*
> *"[I have a] friend who is a large Black male, and [he] was given feedback that they are blunt/aggressive and made others uncomfortable."*

Coming to UCD from another country added nuance to the experience of some Black staff:

> *"Your input is considered an afterthought, not on the forefront. If you come with a goal to advance your career, culture is different, so there are many hurdles before you can get to where everyone else is to be on an equal playing field. It has a cascading effect. Coming from a different continent, there is so much adjustment. I have an additional layer to deal with, not necessarily being Black—concerning other migrants as well."*

Many felt that these interactions stunted their professional growth and achieving excellence and shared that students had similar experiences. One staff agreed that "such norms can be unfair and cause strain on community/organizations" while another shared how her identity as one of few Black women in her profession was both undervalued and unrecognized, particularly when serving Black students. Colorism and privilege were also identified as barriers to staff advancement and a sense of belonging. One staff member who identified as "mixed-raced, but light-skinned" mentioned having a "certain level of privilege" because of their lighter skin. A White staff member also noted that they witnessed "thoughts and ideas being dismissed because of a person's ethnicity." Another White staff member acknowledged a similar observation and elaborated, "if one doesn't feel accepted, they don't feel they can contribute." Other experiences included lived experiences and opinions being dismissed, the "toxicity of group" dynamics in the workplace was left unaddressed, being mistaken for an administrative assistant when the individual was the director because of "the way [they] look," people asking Black individuals to be more "professional," and hair discrimination.

**4.1.7 Diversity Training in Shaping the Workplace Climate**

> *"What will it take to implement a required DEI training/development program for managers, supervisors, and staff?"*
>
> *"People leave due to bad managers—what is preventing us from making these trainings mandatory?"*
>
> *"If we can give leadership those tools, it may improve culture. It could be the difference between someone staying and someone leaving."*

A lack of diversity training was one of the concerns shared by Black staff, especially for people in leadership and during the recruitment process. From the listening sessions, participants shared that a lack of diversity awareness can perpetuate anti-Blackness and microaggression in the workplace. Some staff felt a lack of familiarity and trust in the competence of Black professionals: "When you're Black in a very non-Black/White space, sometimes your presence alone can be controversial." In addition, multiple staff members of color shared experiencing conflicting management styles and mistrust based on differences or unconscious bias, which could be addressed with training.

Participants also shared discrepancies in diversity training requirements and expectations across departments and institutions. For example, a staff member mentioned that although some departments at UC Davis make training (e.g., implicit bias training) a requirement "before sitting on hiring committees," it is not mandatory across the campus. They agreed that UC Davis should have standardized expectations for diversity training among Human Resources (HR), managers, and business partners to combat anti-Blackness in the workplace and bolster the advancement of Black professionals.

Staff suggested Recruitment Advisory Committee (RAC) training for committee participants, departments, and HR representatives about DEI topics such as "unconscious biases," "microaggressions," "managing a diverse team," "impact of [microaggression] on mental safety/ability of employees," and best hiring practices should be standard practice. This could also be implemented in an academic setting: "Many STEM researchers have never worked with Black or minority students. [They] need training." Other participants also suggested having a "toolkit or resource guide" for those on RACs, leadership, and hiring committees. Another participant said, "Interviewees [coming to UC Davis] should be able to ask what types of culturally inclusive training the department heads have completed."

While many participants agreed on mandatory diversity training, there were also mixed perspectives: "Training is not effective when tools are not shared to address bias when you see it or hear it! Even with training, biases can emerge, and folks are not always equipped to respond." "These 'diversity spaces' feel like preaching to the choir. Management is not required or encouraged to attend training on issues of diversity and inclusion." Another staff member expressed that while there has been an "increase of Black colleagues over the years," they have been invited but not served on hiring panels. The panels "often ask for a 'good fit' for their [hiring panel] group, which leads to carbon copy clones of the existing culture." In another situation, another person shared that their department was considered "the most diverse development team in the nation but could do so much better." Other suggestions included adding a diversity statement on job applications for staff and faculty and communicating that DEI matters for all staff, not just Black staff.

**4.1.8 Workplace Climate: Fear of Retaliation and Psychological Well-Being**

> " *"Leadership will ask for feedback but they don't always accept the feedback. Honest feedback can sometimes be used as a tool to punish an employee."* "

During the listening sessions, participants shared their fear of retaliation while conversing about keeping accountability in their workplace. Accountability referred to keeping anti-Blackness and inequality in check and more general concerns in the workplace, albeit no specific details were shared. A participant commented:

*"Could there be a 'Whistleblower Junior' option [and] someone central to speak with? These are all the issues that are happening in my department. I tried to bring it up, but [it got] shot down. Can organizational excellence step in and do a training with leaders of a unit to point out what their staff has been sharing about their unit in a safe place?"*

Two other participants agreed about this point, saying, "[Who] do you talk to bring support without going all the way to the top, without burning the bridge, anonymously?" and "I said something, and nothing happened, or I said something, and I received retaliation for it." When staff saw and felt microaggression and discrimination in their workplaces, many indicated that they feared the negative labels and sanctions:

*"Being seen as oppositional or 'difficult' for speaking up against microaggressions, racism, or just negative behavior to colleagues"*
*"Labeled as an individual disturbing the status quo"*
*"Being penalized for not socializing like peers"*
*"Retaliation for speaking up or reporting discrimination related to hiring and promotion"*

Black staff also discussed psychological well-being, sharing that they wished for more psychological safety at the workplace in general terms and concerning microaggressions. "Being intentional about psychological safety—if you recognize someone is struggling, being able to check in on a human level—an opportunity to do it on a 1:1 level instead of a department-wide level." On a similar note, another staff member mentioned that they wanted remote work availability due to microaggressions: "Remote work is where staff can feel most safe—[there is] more safety from microaggressions at home with a physical boundary on a daily basis. More psychological or physical safety, less judgment at home than in a 'professional' office… [it helps to] avoid toxicity [at the workplace]."

## Recruitment, Retention and Advancement

Recruitment, Retention, and Advancemen*t* is another theme from staff listening sessions that overlap with subthemes from Community, Climate, and Sense of Belonging because of its close tie to workplace climate. This section focuses on topics such as mentorship, professional development, supervisor support, and observing inequality and discrimination in the workplace.

### 4.1.9 Improving Recruitment and Addressing Challenges to Retention

> "*Are we attracting Black graduate students and undergraduate students? How are we helping them and creating the pipeline to a career pathway?*"
>
> "*You don't know what you don't know—learning where to advertise to, where to outreach to, a critical mass of knowing people. How do we create a culture where people can move up into leadership positions, creating those opportunities to be more available to everyone?*"

Many staff at the listening sessions were aware of the need to improve the recruitment of Black staff. They suggested having a consistent recruitment process, competitive salaries, clear job descriptions, frequent informational sessions, and targeted advertisements in Black community spaces. Specifically, they emphasized "demystifying" the recruitment process and actively using media to show diversity at UC Davis. Others mentioned employee support programs that would help "people to get their degrees as they work." They also proposed utilizing "standard exit surveys" to obtain feedback from Black employees about "why they are leaving and what could have been done differently to retain them" at UC Davis.

More staff commented on targeted outreach efforts, advertisements and job postings. One example was to engage with Historically Black College or Universities (HBCUs), Black professional organizations, constituency groups and networks. Staff shared that this would help increase the awareness of higher education as a career field and attract graduating Black students to apply. Others suggested improving equitable hiring practices, such as anonymized job applications, to avoid unconscious bias. A participant commented on an ideal recruitment practice they observed at UC Davis' Shields Library as a suggestion: "There are three informational sessions. Highlight the fact that UC Davis values DEI. Prepare the candidates. Get feedback from the interested candidates on how UC Davis presents DEI." Another participant suggested a similar, high-engagement recruitment process: "A program UC-wide, [where] potential applicants could reach out to volunteers to ask questions…Demystify how to navigate the recruitment process…[it's] almost like a job fair, but talks about how you get a job and what to expect."

Some staff noted that increasing Black student and faculty representation would help recruit more Black staff, particularly in STEM. In alignment, staff stressed the importance of graduate students seeing themselves in their faculty, particularly faculty whose research is focused on the African diaspora. One participant commented that a White professor was teaching on West Africa and Caribbean experiences when there was a "young Black woman applicant that was qualified but not hired." Overall, participants suggested a diversity-oriented change in recruitment practices at UC Davis to better support Black staff excellence at UC Davis.

In terms of challenges with retention, some participants expressed concerns with keeping Black faculty as well as staff. In one instance a staff shared that a "tenured professor left the university because the support she was promised did not come through." Another participant who identified themselves as Latino shared that "living in Davis can be an unwelcoming space" due to "middle-class whiteness in the community" that constantly makes him "very aware of where he lives" and impacts staying at UCD. Some staff also felt that "discipline for any discriminatory practices" was needed because "training doesn't seem to be enough" to support Black staff retention. Other themes, such as inequality and discrimination in career advancement, intertwined with these challenges: "If people don't feel they can move up, they will move on if not even within Davis, move outside of UCD especially if they have applied for higher positions 4-5 times, they will move on." Others suggested administering "standard exit surveys" to address Black staff recruitment and retention as previously mentioned.

**4.1.10 Lack of Career Path, Career Pipeline, and Career Advancement Opportunities**

Multiple staff noted that they would like a clearer guide for career opportunities and advancement: "[There is] no established career path, track, or program that helps [staff] move from one level to the next at UC Davis." A staff member said that the university "go beyond simply 'diversity' and focus on expanding the pipeline for Black staff." Another staff echoed the importance of increasing "the pipeline and awareness of higher education jobs for folks, both for staff and academic positions." They further emphasized that this is an "outreach question" that needs to ensure that "[Black staff] are in those spaces."

Overall, participants suggested that having a clear, well-communicated, and transparent career path or pipeline for Black staff would be helpful for them to excel at UC Davis. This includes a greater awareness and understanding of Career Tracks[14], a resource that even participants who were well-established in their careers indicated needing more information about. Staff further shared that this requires intentional outreach and continuous institutional support (e.g., resources and workshops) to leverage the information gap, promote Black excellence, and increase diversity at UC Davis). They suggested sessions about general campus resources for staff be offered to help their transition to UC Davis. Black staff commented that "systematically, it is really difficult to excel or advance… [given] some colleagues are where they were when they first got to UC Davis." In cases where the staff could not "move up" within their department, another staff member shared that they "had to move out [of their department] to grow [professionally]." In another instance, a staff member commented that while they "found ways on [their] own time," for professional development and they wished that the those were also available to other staff through the university.

Lack of opportunities to "move up" in their career to increase their salary and obtain a promotion was a barrier to their career advancements as several Black staff pointed out. For example, a staff member took an administrator role reporting to a director but had to take a lot of the director's work. When the individual requested a pay raise due to increased workload and responsibilities, their boss declined it. Some staff noted "having to wait for a person to retire before they can get a promotion." Another person shared that if there was an open position, they had to work harder, do better, and do tasks outside their job description to get a promotion. Others shared:

> *"Getting a raise and position title was difficult until it benefited my coworkers, so they had to give it to me."*
> *"I have noticed that my Black colleagues and myself have been at the bottom end of the salary range. There is little to no support to increase it to better align with the scope, scale, and impact of the work."*

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[14] https://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/compensation/career-tracks

Other Black staff indicated experiencing a lack of support for their professional development. They felt they did not receive the same support from their supervisors as their peers. One participant told their supervisor they were interested in a professional development program. Despite the staff member's willingness to pay the program fees, the supervisor did not support the opportunity, stating the "department did not need it." The staff member commented that the lack of support was due to their race. Another staff member was denied the opportunity to participate in campus committees: "I wasn't allowed to get on committees, I was told my position I couldn't, but coworkers with the same job title were allowed."

**4.1.11 Mentorship**

> "There is a lack of POC (Person of Color) mentors to guide staff in career advancement opportunities, including job shadowing."
>
> "There is an overall lack of sponsorship or mentorship to guide folks in advancement, growth, and opportunities in their specific interests."
>
> "What do folks need to know to navigate the university, those overloads or things that come up in their careers? Because folks aren't aware of the policies on campus, and mentorship would help."

Many participants, regardless of their racial self-identification, agreed that mentorship is crucial to achieving excellence. Many mentioned that "informal mentors," "success or professional coaching," and "mentorships with someone who has a similar experience or struggle and is willing to guide, encourage, and advocate" helped them to be successful. While not all participants reported having mentorship opportunities, those who did indicated that it helped them to achieve excellence. They generally agreed that offering more mentorship opportunities and strengthening them is beneficial for staff of color to be successful. That said, many participants also highlighted the need for direct mentorship. Despite having several mentorship programs within the university, the experience and quality seemed to vary among individuals. In health, a staff member mentioned a "lack of mentorship in hospitals for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color)." In addition, individuals expressed struggles in finding mentors who could help them to excel in their careers.

A staff member reflected that there are more mentorship resources now compared to when they first began their work at UC Davis over a decade ago: "The campus has tried a couple of things, whether it's group or 1:1." Yet, the lack of mentorship for underrepresented groups and "not having as many diverse folks on campus" persists. The staff stated that mentorship is important because it helps the mentees better understand and navigate their professional endeavors at UC Davis. Staff also indicated a lack of, and thus a need for, more mentors and mentorship programs from those with more "authority and positionality" in their field. Some participants' mentorship experience resulted from positive relationships with their supervisors, who supported their career advancement. They further shared the importance of networking, finding people with shared experiences at UC Davis, and being part of bigger UC-wide groups and communities.

**4.1.12 Professional Development**

Systemwide and campus programs helped participants achieve excellence in their work, including the UC Management Skills Assessment Program and UC-Coro Systemwide Leadership Collaborative. UC Davis programs included Staff Development and Professional Development (SDPD) courses, Career Management Academy, Leadership Challenge, Management Skills Assessment program, and diversity-oriented programs. Specifically, one participant shared their appreciation of the Implicit Bias series:

> *"I've appreciated the Implicit Bias series - especially in the hiring process. The other piece is more around managers and supervisors trying to manage in a respectful way, not taking credit for their people's work, and helping them feel supported. Some work on the management/supervisory level so they can better support their people."*

In addition, staff noted completing a certification program in their expertise, attending conferences, doing special projects, and networking with other professional peers helped them succeed in their jobs. In all the activities mentioned above, intentional, institutional support (e.g., "integrating professional development as part of the annual appraisal process") was key to helping staff develop their professional skills and take advantage of the resources available at UC Davis. Other staff mentioned that the programs helped them to "build community," "grow professionally within [their] current role," and "helped staff find and see themselves in a career at UC Davis." However, not all staff were aware of these resources:

> *"I don't know what exists UC-wide that helps my peers or colleagues excel professionally, especially from a DEI perspective."*
> *"Navigating the system is hard, especially when you are coming from being a first-generation college student; I did not know about funding and stipends as a graduate student; some of that has been put into place for students, but I wonder if they have that for staff and careers."*

Furthermore, staff mentioned that professional development requires support such as "time and funding to attend conferences and do special projects." They stated that, while doing special projects for the university is beneficial, they must first be given time. They emphasized having a "supportive supervisor [is a] must." Another staff member shared that, while year-long training programs like UC Davis Administrative Officers for the Future Program provide valuable skill sets for these areas, not many people participate in the programs: "It ends up being a considerable lift sometimes because they attach a huge project so it could be a deterrent for people who are managing a lot in their positions." Several participants shared that opportunities are limited, and they often needed to identify other ways to obtain the professional development and leadership experience needed to be competitive in the workplace and secure a promotion. A staff member shared that there was a management program with HR to work on professional development projects, yet only 30 people could participate among thousands of UC Davis employees. Multiple staff also reported having to participate in associations and committees like AAFSA, SDAAC, Asian Pacific American Systemwide Alliance (APASA) or Latinx Staff and Faculty Association (LSFA) in order to find opportunities for leadership and career development such as being project leads. Other participants noted the adverse impacts of not having the necessary training to advance in their work. One staff member, who has been in the same department for over 20 years, stated that they got three different certificates to "justify reclassification" in their job. Another staff member recalled being asked to complete a task without training. When the task was completed incorrectly due to the lack of training and support, the individual was ridiculed.

**4.1.13 Pressure to Work "Twice as Hard"**

A common theme among staff who identified as members of the African American/African diaspora was that they had to put in a lot more extra work. They shared that there were higher expectations and pressure to perform to meet a "double standard." This included "having to work twice as hard to get advanced [in career]" to "receive the same amount of credit to advance" or "[having] to do more to be viewed as an equal" and feeling pressured to "prove [them]selves" compared to their non-Black peers. They further commented that the efforts and contributions were often overlooked when the staff is a person of color. Black staff also commonly mentioned instances where their competence was questioned, noting a "lack of familiarity and trust in the competence of Black people to get [the] job done." As one staff member shared,

> *"Black folks have been told they are not as competent, and they are inferior. So whether it is in a space or in other areas of our life, people of the African diaspora often have an ingrained belief that we are not as good, not as competent. So we are not able to be seen as equal to others or as individuals."*

A woman of color stated, "You have to do things ten times better [to be successful in your career]." On the other hand, a staff member who identifies as a Black man reflected on his experience with the intersectionality of identities: "It's important for me to acknowledge my privilege as a man, but [to] know that being Black requires me to work twice as hard, and that leads to burnout which can have an impact on career advancement." In addition, participants were often faced with excessive work or service not only based on their expertise but as someone to "represent that group." Staff expressed that these efforts and skill sets were often not acknowledged.

In a career-specific context, staff commented that faculty of color carry an additional expectation in representation, an echoing theme from an earlier section. A staff mentioned: "Faculty of color have more hoops to jump through (volunteer, mentor, expert, etc.). It increases the amount of work they have to [do to] contribute to the university—a double whammy."

**4.1.14 Observing Inequality and Discrimination in the Workplace**

> *'Have a university-wide examination of whether our HR processes support the advancement of DEI in a consistent manner."*
>
> **"** *"How are structural HR policies supporting equity, diverse applicant pool, and a diverse RAC? Are HR structures and policies in place to support that? [We need to] shine light on those structures/processes to ensure they are truly supportive of diversity."* **"**

When asked how anti-Blackness affects one's ability to be successful in the UC Davis workplace, a staff member answered that it affects their wages and career advancement; compared to their peers, they were paid less and had more difficulties in promotions. For example, a participant mentioned that they were told they "couldn't negotiate the salary." Another staff described having "…colleagues and friends who have been doing the role of supervisor or manager, then told there isn't a position available. They leave, it becomes available, and someone else is hired."

Participants discussed what they viewed as inequality and discrimination in hiring practices. A participant shared their experience attending a candidate panel as part of the open recruitment for a Chief Administrative Officer position in which "the Chair, who is a White male, decided to hire another White male... [although] a number of people recommended" a different applicant who was Black. Another participant shared, "Black applicants are put through multiple interview panels, although they are more qualified than other applicants." They further stated that in one of the recruitments, the "applicant hired was less qualified but looked like other non-POC in the department." Another staff member indicated that this occurs regularly in job advancement: "I believe that being Black and being a woman has been difficult for advancement in my career." Many questioned hiring practices and HR policies and whether they were equitable. Multiple staff mentioned that the current hiring practices and hiring managers are often skewed more toward a "homogeneity" of a group than diversity, shaping the recruitment process.

Multiple staff observed "different expectations based on [the staff's] race" and felt that discrimination occurred regularly in job advancement in gendered ways. For example, participants recalled that their Black men-identifying peers were often stereotyped and bypassed for opportunities in their workplace:

> *"[There is a] reluctance to give Black male applicants serious consideration for certain positions."*
> *"[I have a] friend who is a large Black male, and [he] was given feedback that they are blunt/aggressive and made others uncomfortable."*

In such instances, staff wanted "more access and visibility to resources and policies around support and discrimination" along with reporting.

### 4.1.15 Supportive Supervisors and Colleagues

Staff shared that their supportive supervisors and colleagues helped them to excel in their workplaces. According to the staff, supportive supervisors were people who: 1) noticed and acknowledged their skills and efforts; 2) channeled appropriate resources and encouragement for their staff to grow professionally; 3) communicated their capabilities to the senior management for more recognition; 4) provided staff members with opportunities for further growth and encouraged engagement with the work; 5) provided support in problem-solving; and 6) were accepting of the staff member's "authentic self." A staff member acknowledged that their supervisor, who supported their professional development and was "educated in anti-racism," helped them achieve excellence. Other concrete experience included:

> *"Having a supervisor that supports and celebrates [their] growth"*
> *"Establish[ing] goals with supervisor"*
> *"Being able to meet and speak with Senior Leadership and them letting [the participant] know that they would [be] happy to mentor [and] give [them] advice on career advancements"*

Participants further characterized a "supportive supervisor" as someone who encouraged the team's professional development and encouraged diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Some examples of supervisor support included the following: counting staff group or committee work as part of work hours, encouraging participation, "align[ing] training to job duties and encourage[ing] everyone to take courses to advance," along with and encouraging people to be more "well-rounded" by encouraging them to exploring different roles that they were interested in. On the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion, a participant mentioned that a supervisor who "understands anti-Blackness and encourages one to arrive as their authentic

self" helped them succeed at UC Davis. Another participant agreed that having a supportive supervisor who "provides time to do DEI work" helped them achieve excellence at work. Many participants attributed having supervisors who were aware of anti-Blackness and showed appreciation for DEI work with creating a welcoming workplace for Black staff and staff of color. Others commented that having a supportive supervisor helped them to set and reach their professional goals and achieve excellence. They described how these interactions aided staff in finding opportunities for professional growth.

While staff did not share specific instances of the mentor-mentee relationship, in addition to supportive supervisors, they also noted a need for mentorship and sponsorship to succeed in their careers. These figures would be someone "who has had a similar experience and struggle and is willing to guide, encourage, and advocate" for their mentees in the same way they described their supportive supervisors:

> *"Mentorship is so important…not just mentorship but sponsorship. Sponsor a person, help them, volunteer to work with that person, and collaborate with them. It is equally important to be a mentor and sponsor."*

In addition, one staff member shared that over their years of working at UC Davis, there were "good colleagues who have shown [them] the way," while another staff member noted that "departments who have operated as a team tend to do better." Overall, participants expressed that having supportive supervisors and colleagues played a significant role in creating a healthy professional community for Black staff.

## Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

### 4.1.16 Lack of Diversity

Many staff voiced a need for more diversity in their workplaces. A staff member who had experience conducting job interviews at UC Davis indicated that a small number of BIPOC applicants—the staff estimated four applicants out of 100— were being interviewed. Another staff member stated that BIPOC staff were "grossly underrepresented in leadership positions, equity, and pay." Staff shared that having BIPOC staff as interviewers and in leadership was important. They also emphasized a need for more training and support for BIPOC leaders.

During the listening session, multiple participants shared concerns in the following areas: 1) an overall lack of access to and visibility of Black staff members and 2) a lack of diversity in upper management positions. A staff member mentioned that "recruitment lacks the diversity to fairly promote peers when seeking higher positions in management." Furthermore, they stated that Black staff often lacked sponsorship unless others recommended them or were applying to positions emphasizing their racial identity as "Persons of Color." Another staff member reflected that there is a belief that "there can only be one Black leader in management or leadership teams." Echoing the other overarching themes previously highlighted, participants indicated that they want to see more research and transparency around Black staff experience, leadership composition, and salary comparisons with other racial groups in the same role and positions.

### 4.1.17 Achieving Excellence through Personal Attitudes, Self-Promotion and Individual Efforts

During the listening sessions, a common response to "What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?" was personal attitudes, individual effort, and self-promotion. For example, several Black staff members responded that having passion, being focused on career goals, stepping out of their comfort zones, and having positive attitudes helped them to achieve excellence. In

addition, taking advantage of learning opportunities around the campus and actively networking with others supported their professional development. On a similar note, self-promotion of accomplishments was a strategy that several staff used to communicate their professional successes. Others further reflected that they had to advocate for themselves to take trainings and credited campus engagement through committee participation with enabling them to network strategically across campus entities. In general, they had to individually seek out additional resources and make extra efforts to be successful in their work. Some also "volunteered for things, [and] tried different tactics to advance [their] own education" Many Black professionals shared feelings of "pressure to be high achievers" and mentioned their resiliency and hard work needed to be successful in their workplaces.

**4.1.18 Lack of Representation and Sense of Belonging**

> "*Representation matters and helps to create a sense of belonging and inclusion.*"
>
> "*When you don't see people of your own ethnicity or folks you can identify with, it makes you feel very alone.*"
>
> "*I have colleagues that let me know that there is a lack of belonging in seeing yourself in the leadership positions which affects even considering applying to the leadership positions, to begin with.*"

Participants from different breakout groups agreed there is a lack of representation of Black staff and other staff of color at UC Davis. Staff members questioned the recruitment and advertising process at UC Davis, particularly where positions were advertised to get a more diverse pool of applicants. They also felt that "as [the] student body increases in diversity, faculty should reflect that as well." Staff members often connected a lack of representation to a lack of a sense of belonging. Several Black participants reflected that the lack of representation at UC Davis affects them as they navigate their daily work lives at UC Davis. One staff member felt "alone as one of few Black people in a predominantly White space." A staff member added: "When you're Black in a very non-Black/White space, sometimes your presence alone can be controversial." In addition to feeling isolated and "uncomfortable with lack of Black staff and faculty," other staff shared that they were "treated as invisible, resulting in lower confidence and discouragement." Multiple staff specifically pointed out a lack of representation in leadership roles, having observed "mostly White men as faculty and staff" and "senior management [that] are all White." Another staff member agreed that this was "deeply systemic," creating "perceptions that reinforce trends in the department of mostly White people." In addition, a participant shared that the systemic lack of representation and belonging in the workplace further discourages Black staff from applying to leadership positions when they become available.

Diversity in leadership is also important for opportunity and mentorship for Black staff. A participant shared their experiences at a different institution where there was a lack of women or POC that could help them navigate professional opportunities or situations. They mentioned that diversity in leadership allows "access to opportunity/mentorship" for staff of color. Many participants also stated they witnessed a lack of representation across their departments and leadership roles. Another staff member agreed they needed more staff of color represented on UC Davis social media channels.

Staff also noticed that Black students were "not feeling comfortable with diversity represented in faculty, staff, and advisors." While staff raised questions about recruitment practices that would attract more African American staff, they also expressed frustration that their concerns about the lack of Black visibility. Some felt that diversity was seldom prioritized and shared that they were being expected to do "unpaid labor to push DEI efforts." In congruence with Black visibility, staff also noted 1) a lack of action to address these concerns and 2) inconsistency in available networks in campus spaces that could connect Black staff to a larger community. This also shaped the perceptions of Black professionals regarding workplace support.

> " …[R]epresentation matters, and it's an issue we've identified in our staff. Our staff don't reflect the demographics of the areas we are serving. We take pride in having so many first-generation students, but not seeing pathways to careers and/or a reflection of that diversity in staff."
>
> "I believe that at UC Davis and my unit specifically, there aren't opportunities to grow or support in the unit, and because of the lack of diversity, there is no one to advocate for you when you are the only one in the department."

## Key Takeaways: Staff

Across all listening sessions, both staff sessions had the largest attendance. While the first focused on staff African diaspora and the second included staff from all backgrounds, both sessions shared many common themes, especially around anti-Blackness, microaggressions, and discrimination at UC Davis. Participants stressed a strong need for professional development programs and corresponding support surrounding the career advancement of Black staff, along with a need for UC Davis to better communicate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion to create a community climate that can foster Black excellence. While many staff found diversity training helpful, they also expressed that it wasn't "enough" or was not provided to crucial people, such as people in HR and managerial positions.

Transparency and accountability in equitable hiring and promotion practices was another frequently revisited theme. Across multiple breakout groups, Black participants shared that they often had to go through multiple rounds of interviews or were simply "held back from promotion" compared to their White male peers. Participants shared the times when they could not get positions they were qualified for and felt their career advancement, professional growth, and achievement of excellence were hindered by anti-Blackness. They stressed equitable hiring and promotion to go beyond increased numbers to accountability through research and transparency. Furthermore, the listening sessions reflected the need for Black staff to have a safe space to convene, be heard, give honest feedback, and discuss accountability needs at the university without fear of retaliation. Based on these comments, designing a feedback channel for future DEI intervention without having staff face exposure or retaliation is an important aspect to consider.

The listening sessions also revealed an information gap in the institutional resources that would help staff to excel and thrive at UC Davis. While some staff were more aware of the professional development resources or opportunities provided through campus (e.g., certification programs), this was not true for all. Not all staff who were aware of the resources could utilize the opportunities for various reasons, such as a lack of supervisor support or work time allotted for professional development. In addition to the professional resources, the knowledge of and access to social support and community during instances of anti-Blackness and discrimination were also unevenly distributed. When experiencing what they viewed as instances of anti-Blackness and discrimination, multiple participants shared "not knowing where to go"—a recurring theme observed in other listening session groups. This raises concerns about the availability and accessibility of such services and a need for an information hub for Black communities at UC Davis.

Evident from listening sessions, Black staff encounter challenges surrounding anti-Blackness, microaggressions, and discrimination on a daily basis. For example, findings from the listening sessions show that supervisors can act as liaisons by providing helpful resources, and can also serve as barriers to professional growth and advancement of Black staff by showing anti-Blackness and microaggression. The negativity stemming from anti-Blackness has threatened the psychological well-being of staff and created a fear of retaliation, hindering participants from thriving and succeeding. Black staff further shared how their different identities, such as gender and immigrant experiences, can interact with their race during their workplace interactions. For example, experiences of anti-Blackness and microaggression showed up in gendered ways that resulted in different limitations in career advancement and led to frequent stereotyping and microaggressions in their work environment. While the current report did not focus on staff experiences of intersecting identities such as race, gender, or immigration, future efforts in diversity, equity, and advancement should consider such experiences. Focusing on these intersectional experiences in future listening sessions may help understand, recognize, and effectively address the factors that support or challenge Aggie Black Excellence.

## 4.2 Faculty

### Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

**4.2.1 Supportive Community and Networking**

Several faculty participants described how having a supportive community and workplace climate helped them thrive. They also identified supportive departments and department heads that encouraged faculty accountability as a department-wide factor that helped them excel in their careers. Newer faculty members expressed that supportive colleagues who actively contacted them made them feel welcome in their department. They further shared that seemingly small actions like responsive emails made some faculty members feel noticed and appreciated, which helped create a sense of belonging. One participant shared, "[When you first arrive] it's hard to establish the personal connections so that you feel that you belong and to establish ties." Other aspects of community-building included communication and information-sharing in their professional networks, which multiple participants perceived as an essential part of their professional life at UC Davis. During the listening sessions, a few participants actively encouraged their colleagues to connect outside their department and collaborate with others. For example, a faculty member suggested creating a working group (e.g., a "writing group to create togetherness and community") that would also provide "a space for each other's stories" and "in support of each other's writing and goals." The Center for the Advancement of Multicultural Perspective on Social Science, Arts, and Humanities (CAMPSSAH)[15] is another resource faculty participants shared for Black faculty to find community. CAMPSSAH was described as providing a venue for the faculty to build communities and network across different departments, especially for faculty members of color. In addition to the social aspect, it was noted that CAMPSSAH was providing spaces and opportunities to foster career advancement through writing groups, weekly meetings, coaching, and the aligning accountability structure.

### Recruitment, Retention and Advancement

**4.2.2 Added Pressure on Black Faculty**

Faculty members shared that there was an additional pressure to do "extra work" or have an "increased load of responsibility" for work that may prevent them from taking a break or vacation. They also shared that extra work in graduate student advising and the emotional labor in serving students of color were often not counted in the merit process for academic career promotion. During the listening session, a faculty member recalled being told to "hold back" on reporting their activities and services because they were not "applicable" to the merit process. The faculty members expressed that they felt as if they were "being denied the full acknowledgment of [their] accomplishments." Another faculty member shared that they had an "increased load of responsibility" but felt they could not "take a vacation while other colleagues can." On the other hand, when a faculty member was in a department where the majority of faculty were scholars of color, they recalled not having to justify the value of their work to their colleagues. Although faculty members' experiences differed by department, faculty members mentioned that there was a cycle of "having to prove self over and over."

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[15] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/campssah

**4.2.3 Institutional Barriers and Overall Lack of Institutional Support**

Institutional barriers and an overall lack of support were common impediments identified by faculty participants. One faculty member shared that there was no history of support for Black faculty at UC Davis, recalling that they had "no place to find relief or support for their personal issues such as anxiety or stress [...] from George Floyd and other incidences of violence enacted against the African American diaspora." They went on to describe how, despite this, Black faculty were expected to support their students while they too were in distress. Other participants added that they needed department leadership's support to participate in activities like the Aggie Black Excellence listening session. Several faculty members indicated they sought and received support from organizations outside the university. They felt that they needed a faculty advocacy office focusing on Innovation Access and increased institutional support from UC Davis for productivity, well-advertised faculty success programs, and additional resources for faculty members who seek to educate and nurture Black students—because they are often the least funded. Several professional and logistical barriers at UC Davis were identified as detrimental to Faculty success as scholars. One faculty member shared that some policies, rules, and practices created barriers to collaboration. They stated that the administrative aspects of such processes were often not effective and discouraging for them to collaborate on, including projects such as grants and research. Another noted institutional barrier to success was an unhealthy merit system for evaluating tenured faculty members and how, for Black faculty, many services and "extra work" they perform often go unnoticed or are undervalued in the merit system. This was similar to the findings from the Faculty Retention and Inclusive Excellence Networks–Designing Solutions (FRIENDS) Initiative in 2020 on invisible labor, particularly for racially minoritized faculty and women of color.[16]

**4.2.4 Mentoring and Guidance in Navigating the Academic Career**

Many faculty participants expressed an overall lack of guidance in navigating their academic career, institution-specific, "hidden" curriculum such as working through a bureaucratic institution and its processes, balancing service and teaching, promotion and salary negotiation, and other research and funding-related matters. As such, faculty members indicated a need for a faculty orientation and a more informal, structured, robust, and effective mentoring program. In response, several faculty members shared that increased professional guidance (e.g., boot camps, class, or workshops), more transparent conversations and communication around career advancement, and mentorship may help retention. This was similar to faculty comments shared during the FRIENDS April convening, and a number of the participants identified leveraging membership through the university to the NCFDD as a resource for continuing professional development.[17]

**4.2.5 Attracting Black Faculty**

UC Davis's Capital Resource Network[18] was identified as an effective recruitment and retention tool given it "supports newly recruited employees and their families by easing transition stress and assisting to establish personal and professional connections."[19] One new faculty member shared how they were able to buy a house in Davis and that home buying "will allow [them] to stay [at UC Davis] because [they're] a homeowner." They pointed to this program as a means to help attract and retain more Black faculty.

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[16] Refer to FRIENDS—Team Lime's presentation on "Invisible" Labor.
https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/FRIENDS_Lime_InvisibleLabor_Presentation.pdf
[17] In addition, the notes also mention that men are more hesitant to ask for help. Thus, if an intervention is to be made, the gendered aspect should be taken in consideration as well.
[18] https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/capital-resource-network
[19] https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/capital-resource-network

## Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

> " *I feel lonely in [my] pocket of research…[I want to] see the university recruit students of color who want to do research.* "

### 4.2.6 Black Representation and Feelings of Isolation

Representation made a big difference in Black faculty experiences at UC Davis. For example, a faculty member described their professional school as "a majority-minority faculty" department. As such, they "never had to justify their research or scholarship because other faculty members see the value" in their work. However, this experience was not typical for many faculty listening session participants. In addition to the lack of Black faculty, participants from the listening session also mentioned that "connections to other Black faculty have been word of mouth," making it "difficult and frustrating to find connections."

Furthermore, faculty members expressed that there were limited opportunities to build connections with other Black faculty members. They said there was a need for ways to "facilitate sustainable community-building among Black faculty." Some faculty felt a sense of isolation due to the low number of Black student representation in the classroom.

### 4.2.7 The Invisible Labor:[20] Emotional Labor and Graduate Student Advising

> " *"[We were] told to restrict their advising, caregiving, and support-related activities for Black students and concentrate on research and publishing."*
>
> *"[We] need leadership support within departments to participate in activities like 'Aggie Black Excellence.'"* "

Faculty members from the listening session mentioned that while graduate student advising required a lot of energy, material, and emotional resources, they often lacked external support. Furthermore, faculty members noted that the labor and efforts were not transferable to the faculty's merit, which would later help them to be professionally successful. Several faculty members shared experiences of having an "overload of service and emotional labor for students of color" because faculty members of color were so few. Many of these services did not translate into merit and promotion, either. Many also indicated being under-resourced, often having inadequate institutional support for Black faculty and graduate students, feeling that their services were undervalued by the university, and receiving little to no acknowledgment in academia's merit system.

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[20] FRIENDS—Team Lime covers the invisible labor performed by racially minoritized faculty, particularly women of color (https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/FRIENDS_Lime_InvisibleLabor_Presentation.pdf). Team Lemon covers the women and minority faculty advancement from associate to full professor, and how various undervalued services that are unequally distributed to women and minority faculty members have led to a longer time to reach full professorship (https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/FRIENDS_Lemon_PromotionFull_Presentation.pdf).

## Key Takeaways: Faculty

Black faculty participants said they would like a healthy community where they could feel a sense of belonging and foster professional networks. They expressed hardships in their professional lives, such as pressure to take on extra work in the university's academic merit system, a lack of institutional support in their research and graduate student mentorship, and a lack of guidance and mentorship in their career, such as a route to a tenured professorship. In addition, faculty members shared feelings of isolation and a general lack of Black representation among UC Davis faculty. In fact, the listening session became an opportunity and a space for Black faculty to network, share resources, and convene. This communicated a need for more spaces for community-building and networking to support Black faculty, in addition to adopting and expanding programs like the Faculty Success Program at the NCFDD.[21]

As defined in the FRIENDS presentation, invisible labor refers to various service work that faculty perform that often goes unnoticed.[22] According to the COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Survey Reports[23] in 2017, many associate professors at UC Davis indicated that they spent too much time on service (e.g., advising and mentoring students) and on committees (programs, departments, and other campus committees). In fact, this aligns with the three problems of the current service work that FRIENDS participants identified: "overlooked and unrewarded," "ill-defined and inequitable," and "undervalued," which were often performed by "racially minoritized faculty, particularly women of color."[24]

The listening session added another layer of emotional labor through advising and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty felt limited support from the institution to engage in meaningful activities that foster Black student success, such as graduate student advising. Instead, the Black faculty were often steered in the direction of research and publishing, which translated into merit and promotion at an academic research institution like UC Davis. Many expressed that their desire to advise and mentor Black graduate students often conflicted with the merit-based reward system, which gave little to no recognition for such service in the tenure and promotion process. With too few faculty of color for Black graduate students, there is an increased emotional labor associated. This hints at how the current faculty of color may be overburdened with services and limited in the support they can invest for each student. This questions the merit system's evaluation process at UC Davis. It calls for an action to incorporate DEI for a more equitable review process.

The listening sessions shed light on several issues and recommendations the FRIENDS initiative identified regarding faculty retention and inclusivity: invisible labor of racially minoritized faculty, difficulty for women and minority faculty to advance to full professor level, and a need for conscious, healthy, and productive academic climates. Aspects such as faculty career mentoring, invisible labor, and campus climate also overlapped in the FRIENDS initiative and the ABE listening sessions. This underscores a critical need to retain and bolster the advancement of Black faculty by addressing the challenges.

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[21] https://www.facultydiversity.org/
[22] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/FRIENDS_Lime_InvisibleLabor_Presentation.pdf
[23] https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/faculty-satisfaction-survey-reports-coache
[24] Refer to FRIENDS—Team Lime's presentation on "Invisible" Labor.

## 4.3 Undergraduate Students

> " *"Where everybody at?"*
>
> *"I see [campus] tours everywhere, but I don't see Black people."* "

## Communication and Information

### 4.3.1 Greater Investment in Efforts that Work

Participants stressed the need for the university to put greater investment in programs that work in helping them navigate the university and support their success. They specifically pointed to a program briefly mentioned earlier, the Linda Francis Alexander Scholars (LFA) Program, as an example of an effective student success model that should be scaled up. Currently offered each year to approximately 30-40 incoming UC Davis undergraduate first-year or transfer students of the African diaspora, LFA provides a week-long residential pre-matriculation program featuring a "culturally relevant introduction to university life that includes goal-setting, leadership training, academic advising, and an introduction to university expectations" followed by academic, social, and cultural enrichment opportunities provided throughout their first year. [25] Listening session participants described how LFA helped them navigate college through services like tutoring, community-building, and connection to campus resources. For example, a student shared that through LFA, they found the "Black floor (in Campbell Hall, or C2)," the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and counseling support. Furthermore, through these connections, they were introduced to "Black administration in student housing," which then linked the student to African Diaspora Cultivating Education (ACE), a student-led retention program focused on the African diaspora, [26] along with the African diaspora listserv used to promote events and opportunities to the Black campus community known as the AAU listserv[27] and various Black student meetings on campus.

While some students who participated in LFA expressed feeling left on their own to "figure out" how to continue navigating the university after their first year of support, LFA participants shared feeling better connected to campus resources than their peers. This type of navigational support also ensured the LFA participants received consistent communication and various avenues to network and receive key information to support their needs in and outside of the classroom, something that many listening session participants identified as lacking for the broader Black student community.

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[25] LFA activities include individualized academic advising and support, proactive grade monitoring, career and post-graduation advising, quarterly seminars and events for academic achievement, cultural exploration, and identity development. https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/programs/linda-frances-alexander-scholars-program

[26] ACE is one of multiple student-initiated outreach/retention programs offered through the UCD Student Recruitment and Retention Center https://srrc.ucdavis.edu/programs/ace

[27] The "AAU listserv" serves the Black community on campus. The listserv is "used by students, student organizations, staff, faculty, alumni, and community to promote various meetings, events, information, and job fairs on campus and in the broader community." (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5ef-M7xICYDky1AqCVG1hHEwHQqGdGjZ7-XLcGN5isuNbUg/viewform)

**4.3.2 Accessing Information**

One of the main needs undergraduate students identified was greater communication and promotion of programs and services that effectively support Black students at UC Davis. Collectively, there was a shared sentiment among participants that access to information, resources, and community is unevenly distributed throughout Black student communities in general. Some students shared their awareness of support through the CADSS and ACE, yet many of their peers were not. As one student noted, "People don't know about Black organizations on campus like CADSS," underscoring a sentiment from participants that these support resources often lacked adequate promotion by the university through various mediums such as campus social media outlets.

Outside of those who participated in LFA, several students shared that they were only aware of campus resources because they happened to know a very knowledgeable "insider." Echoing these concerns, multiple students further shared that it would have been "impossible" to learn about the available offerings through these support systems had they not been connected with their peers or advisors who were well-versed in campus resources or engaged in a program such as LFA. In other words, while LFA helped students to have a solid start at UC Davis by connecting them to resources, many of these opportunities are still communicated and shared through word of mouth rather than an official, formal structure that is well-promoted and widely known to all students. Several student participants were not aware of the AAU listserv.[28]

On the other hand, Black student leaders from the listening session shared a unique challenge of acquiring contact information for new and currently enrolled Black undergraduates to perform outreach and share ways to connect with their organizations. They stressed ongoing barriers to securing this information from the university, which significantly limited their ability to facilitate peer-to-peer connections to support Black student retention and community building—an essential component of the work being done through their registered student organizations. Participants collectively identified a lack of communication and information for Black students to engage with one another in the community (e.g., formal and informal social events) as a challenge to building strong networks with their peers, which often led to feelings of isolation. They suggested that increased access to Black student contact information by Black registered student organizations would be a way to help resolve this issue. One student shared that they observed a lack of Black representation while walking around campus, as they further stressed the need to know where to find Black spaces on campus due to the limited visible representation they observed.

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[28] https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/

# Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

> " *"People can stare a lot; people naturally stray away, but unintentionally."*
>
> *"People are nice, but sometimes they don't know how to act" around Black people.*
>
> *"People incorrectly assumed other people have the same experiences."* "

### 4.3.3 Organizations and Identity-Based Transitional Support

Student listening session participants identified community building and social networks as powerful resources and safe spaces that helped them cultivate a sense of community and supported their success at UC Davis. These spaces included student organizations (ranging from religious and academic to cultural and athletic), campus offices, and transitional support programs. Specifically, students highlighted Black student-serving organizations as a crucial source of building community networks and support alongside courses offered through African American Studies and LFA. Along with CADSS, participants attributed much of their success to the support received through campus services such as Health Professions Advising (HPA) and EOP. Another program highlighted by participants was the First-Year Seminars program, which provides new UCD students with "an opportunity to engage with faculty and [their] peers in a small classroom environment" of no larger than 19 students to support their adjustment to college life, and "foster a sense of belonging and shared curiosity" that compliments the larger introductory courses new students take in their first year as an Aggie.[29] LFA participants stressed the need to expand the LFA program to more students, describing how they felt more prepared to navigate the university than their peers who did not participate in it.

### 4.3.4 Black Spaces

Participants identified particular locations as safe spaces for Black students to convene, foster a sense of community, and be their authentic selves. This report refers to these as Black spaces. One such space was the African & African American (AA) living-learning community, or "'the Black Floor' or 'C2' in Campbell Hall."[30] [31] Participants found C2 to be a community where they "felt more comfortable" and could be themselves. In addition to providing more community resources for Black students, such as C2 and CADSS, participants expressed that UC Davis needs to actively promote these resources for increased visibility.

While students found critical support and community through CADSS and Campbell Hall, participants unanimously expressed frustration with the lack of upkeep for the facilities for the Black community spaces. They felt that UC Davis needed to provide more support in this regard. Some participants referred to Campbell Hall as the dorms for Black students, and in both instances, students described how the physical condition of the facilities was older and poorly managed. Students often expressed that CADSS is not in the best location,

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[29] https://fys.ucdavis.edu/student_faq

[30] The AAA Living-Learning Community is a dormitory named after Leslie Campbell. Campbell retired from UC Davis as Senior Associate Director of Admissions after a nearly 30-year career and was respected across campus as an innovative leader, a staunch champion for students, and a reflection of Black excellence, remembered especially "for her lasting and enduring contributions to the African American community, including her work with the Black Family Week Cultural Programs and helping to establish the annual Leadership Conference." https://housing.ucdavis.edu/academics/living-learning-communities/2022-23/

[31] https://housing.ucdavis.edu/residence-halls/campbell-hall/

especially compared to other centers and student services around the campus, sharing that "there isn't even a sign!" outside where it is located. Others were displeased with it being near the bathrooms.

Student participants expressed similar frustration about their dorms in Campbell Hall. One participant shared, "When I moved in, I thought it would be a whole building, not a floor!" while other students who decided to live on the African American & African Living-Learning Community (AAA Living-Learning Community, or C2) floor said that "the vents were too loud… [and] the heating system only went up to 70 degrees in the winter." Conversely, another student stated that they "did not choose to live on the Black-only floor…[because] Black stuff is funded the least [and] Black housing always gets the least funding." Participants did not view this as something in control of the staff who ran these spaces. Rather, their comments alluded to not feeling valued or supported as Black students by the university, as communicated through the lack of care for these facilities.

### 4.3.5 Greater Connections: Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students and Peers

Along with campus support services such as CADSS and programs housed in the Student Community Center, participants shared that building formal and informal communities in smaller classrooms and departments helped them to be successful at UC Davis. One student shared that feeling more connected to their department and faculty helped their academic success. Another student in STEM attributed their "pivotal success" in academics to the support system they found with other Black women in STEM. Other instances included positive encounters with Black staff and attending a "Black mixer event" where undergraduate students could interact with Black graduate students and learn about their experiences. Several students also mentioned that a big part of their success, including successful community-building, came from their individual, proactive research and outreach. Participants ubiquitously said they would need to actively reach out to others and seek out organizations and communities: "You have to put yourself out there. You must work to make friends here at Davis." Other students also noted the need for greater connection within the Black community, with one student sharing how "some Black students do not acknowledge other Black students; this can hurt," noting the disconnect that can come even within the community. Both cases communicated the isolation that many undergraduate listening session participants experienced.

### 4.3.6 Microaggressions

Participants agreed that Black students faced microaggressions, anti-Blackness, and isolation regularly. They shared that microaggressions, anti-Blackness, and isolation negatively affected their overall educational experiences in the following ways:

- Challenges connecting with classmates, making friends, and forming study groups
- Reluctance to reach out to professors or share their ideas in class
- Feeling like their input is not valued
- Questioning their abilities
- Self-isolation

Multiple students recalled instances where they were frequently left out during class collaborative projects or small classroom activities. Other students often "turn[ed] away from Black students," which led to Black students hesitating to participate in class and interact with peers. Multiple participants in STEM majors specifically talked about not being invited or feeling welcomed by their non-Black classmates to be lab partners or join a team when their courses required group work. As one student shared, "People don't even sit next to

me" in class, while another said, "People moved [a] few seats away to avoid sitting next to a Black student… [it] makes me apprehensive to participate." Another student recalled that "[during a classroom activity] when [the instructor] say[s] 'talk to each other,' we don't really 'talk to each other.'…I also have an afro, and…people don't want to talk to me."

### 4.3.7 Imposter Syndrome and Deficit Thinking

Several students shared how the experiences described in the previous sections led to questioning if they were good enough academically to be at UC Davis. This is known as imposter syndrome, a feeling of self-doubt and insecurity about one's skills and accomplishments despite their high achievements (Clance & Imes, 1978). One student stated, "You just feel like 'am I supposed to be here? Am I smart enough?'" Some participants had adopted a deficit thinking mindset[32] and described often feeling "not qualified" to be at UC Davis despite their academic excellence and capabilities. Another student painfully acknowledged that they were internalizing anti-Blackness and questioning their abilities and belonging at UC Davis, stating that "it makes me feel anti-Black to myself…that I feel less than, or that my opinions are not being valued…I've dimmed myself in conversations that make me feel bad." Another student, once they got to UC Davis, mentioned that he had to "work twice as hard to be at [his peers'] level."

### 4.3.8 City of Davis and Physical Safety

Some students also noted discomfort and potential threats to their physical safety in the city of Davis. One student shared their experience of feeling singled out as a Black person downtown, describing how they "get more looks" and "people [are] more aware in Downtown Davis" of their presence. This person also expressed how they "hate walking across Cafe Bernardo." Another student shared that they "do not feel safe near In-N-Out." The participants viewed these experiences and safety concerns as rooted in anti-Blackness and racism. Other students recalled being stared at, whether on campus or in the surrounding community. While they believed it was not intentional, the staring made the students othered.

## Recruitment, Retention and Advancement

### 4.3.9 UCD as a Predominantly White Institution (PWI)

Most student participants from the second listening session considered UC Davis a "White-dominated space." A student shared that many spaces at UC Davis are "predominantly White and Asian" and that these spaces lacked Black student representation. A common theme expressed among both undergraduate listening sessions was an overall lack of Black representation and visibility around the campus, in lecture halls, within campus leadership, and among faculty. Students expressed concern with campus resources designed to support Black students but not staffed by Black-identifying individuals.

Participants also discussed why they decided to come to UC Davis. Their reasons varied from getting a good financial aid package to UC Davis being one of the few colleges they were admitted to. However, when asked during one of the breakout sessions, "If you had the same financial aid to both HBCU and UC Davis, would you still go to UC Davis?" many expressed that they would choose an HBCU. For example, a student viewed one of the benefits of being enrolled at an HBCU as providing students with the comfort of having a Black community that is highly visible. The student mentioned that such comfort is "something that you sacrifice for

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[32] A deficit mindset is when people attribute a person's struggle to their personal and internal deficiencies or shortcomings rather than other structural forces that may shape their performance (Valencia, 1997).

[an] education [at UC Davis]." Similarly, another student shared how "sitting in the room alone by yourself…just being a Black student on campus is hard" and that being a Black student at UC Davis had them "feeling uncomfortable." Overall, the student participants from the second listening session considered the Black student community and visibility at HBCUs more attractive than UC Davis.

### 4.3.10 Tokenization and Hypervisibility

Some participants shared their experience with the college application process and how they felt "tokenized" for diversity. Several students agreed that even before they enrolled at UC Davis, they felt they were "[a] quota for schools to fill" and "seen as a tool," making their racial identity hyper-visible. One student shared an experience during high school when they were told, "Make sure to put that you're Black!" Such interactions influenced their perception of the admissions and enrollment process and feelings about the university, stating that "they're using our bodies at their expense." Such instances of tokenization, devaluation of one's efforts and qualifications, and other instances of microaggression affected many participants' attitudes and perceptions of UC Davis and their resulting experiences. These included "small gestures and body language that does not make a welcoming presence for the students" and "lack of respect for Black folks." In addition, several students felt that their Blackness was only valued when needed for campus promotion. One participant described when someone approached them to take pictures of them and their Black peers for what they perceived as marketing purposes: "Oh, we don't see Black people—can you three (three Black students) pose real quick?" Other students recalled when others told them they were "[at UC Davis] because of affirmative action." Student participants also noted that "people want Black people in their team to have a 'Black' person" concerning group participation with their non-Black peers.

Due to the hypervisibility of race, students expressed apprehension in various academic and social activities such as student government and campus media production. For example, multiple students shared that Black students were often "tokenized" and were unequally assigned to "diversity-related responsibilities," which has made it difficult for them to "own their student organization experiences aside from racialized ones." Many participants mentioned how they've tried to "just get used to it" so that it doesn't "bother [them] too much" while navigating their college and career journey.

### 4.3.11 Invisible Labor and Student Attrition

Most student participants expressed strong passion and dedication to helping their community and fellow Black students despite the significant responsibility and time commitment involved. Most, if not all, students were involved in a student organization and serving in leadership positions while navigating and balancing academics, career-related activities, and college life in general. As students discussed their struggles and the resources they used to be successful at UC Davis, one participant stated, "I don't want to have other Black people go through what we go through" as their motivation to take on so much responsibility. The same student also mentioned that it was their "passion" to continue to "help out and be there for the [Black] community" in predominantly non-Black settings like UC Davis.

Many students agreed on the struggles of self-care versus being an agent of change. They expressed how "it feels like a lot" with the heavy emotional burden they carried to create safe and supportive spaces for their Black student peers on top of being students themselves. Another participant agreed that it "takes a lot" out of the student in their effort to "look after" other Black students as a student leader. The student stated that "this [work] will never end," describing the unfair burden and responsibility Black students and Black student leaders felt to uplift their community on campus. Several participants also raised concerns about Black student retention, noting how many of their Black student peers were "dropping out, leaving…[and]

transferring out" often after their first year. Participants further expressed that their voices were not heard in the larger campus conversations, as their comments and requests surrounding the related issues were often "not prioritized" by the campus.

## Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

### 4.3.12 Uplifting Black Culture through Institutional Change

Participants recommended a greater promotion of Black student clubs, organizations, and resources to increase Black visibility at UC Davis. They also suggested hiring more Black professors and using social media to communicate with others about the Black community at UC Davis. Students also emphasized the importance of campus community spaces and events where they could feel comfortable. Additionally, students expressed a need for targeted outreach programs and retention efforts for Black students. Students were aware that UC Davis, as an institution, not just individuals, must strive to ensure excellence and advancement for Black students. They emphasized that the campus must focus on Black student retention, not just recruitment. They also noted that these efforts require institutional support to shift the culture of the UC Davis campus to respect, celebrate, and cultivate success for Black students.

### 4.3.13 Diversity Curriculum, Training and Awareness

While students reflected on their successes and challenges as Black students at UC Davis, they urged better communication and to change the culture of the UC Davis student body towards diversity, equity, and inclusion by encouraging coursework and DEI training. Students experienced or knew people who have experienced anti-Blackness at UC Davis and shared accounts where they observed a lack of awareness and exposure to diversity from other students. They shared that their experiences could have been prevented through greater DEI awareness and training through more formal methods.

To address microaggressions and some of the other experiences previously described, participants stressed the need for greater diversity awareness on campus. Participants voiced that prioritization of diversity, equity, and inclusion must take a more deliberate effort. Specifically, students noted that "DEI training is [currently] optional" during the new student orientation and should be mandatory. Students also suggested changes be made to general education requirements and classroom practices that would increase the awareness of diversity and inclusion in the general campus community culture.

## Key Takeaways: Undergraduate Students

Black students were looking for more ways to connect, communicate, and engage. Black student leaders were looking for easier ways to access peer contact information to support this goal. Along with the campus resources identified, Black student success has been built upon a strong sense of community that individual students commit themselves to. The community is strong but is seeking greater connection. While not explicitly stated, the greater need for community (along with microaggressions and the isolation students articulated) may be amplified by the literal disconnect that all students experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These instances of internalized anti-Blackness, imposter syndrome, and deficit thinking have impacted student self-perception and social and psychological well-being. While not explicitly stated, these may likely have affected their academic performance. These experiences seemed to drive students away from seeing UC Davis as a home away from home. Students shared that they were less engaged academically (engaging with the course material, faculty, or the TAs) and in the campus community due to frequent tokenization. Sadly, some Black students seem to have become accustomed to feeling othered.

Students also mentioned that they had to be proactive to find and create community. This not only underscores the role that a sense of belonging plays in student success but also aligns with theme 1, Communication and Information. The lack of communication and promotion of resources across student communities results in Black students being burdened with the additional workload and responsibility of looking for channels of communication and networking opportunities to survive and thrive as a scholar. In a sense, students took on the dual role of campus resource ambassadors for their community while learning to navigate college and careers themselves. In addition to all the hardships, college-and-career navigation, racism, and microaggression, the students in the listening sessions were doing extra work to serve their communities by sharing information and resources that are often not easily accessible. The listening session participants were very passionate, high-achieving, highly motivated students who deserved recognition for excellence. The unequal burden that Black students at UC Davis experience must be reflected in a long-term policy that addresses anti-Blackness culture and Black student support.

The participants' perceptions showed that the university should proactively educate potential students, families, and the community on the admissions and enrollment process and take steps to demystify and address any misperceptions. This would help students feel a sense of inclusion and representation of the diaspora without feeling tokenized in the admissions and enrollment process.

The concern about not having Black individuals' staffing spaces for Black students is a complex combination of the implicit messages about Black space and a sense of belonging rather than a simple lack of "face" representation. This calls for attention to Black student retention and continued support throughout students' college careers.

The listening session participants reported feeling exploited by the university for photo opportunities. One way to address such issues is for campus communications departments to be present during community events and activities, engage with the community, and capture candid experiences rather than taking posed shots. Potential students would be more likely to see examples of Black people and African diaspora activities on campus as authentic.

# 4.4 Graduate Students

Graduate student listening session participants spent extensive time sharing their experiences in three themes: Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging; Recruitment, Retention and Advancement; and Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility. While this report did not specifically highlight Communication and Information, the importance of communication channels is prevalent throughout all the other themes in the graduate student listening session.

## Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

> “There is a lack of certainty about what can be done when you are experiencing anti-Blackness/racism.”
>
> “Everyone and everything is so scattered.”

**4.4.1 Microaggressions and Anti-Blackness in Academia**

Graduate student participants recalled instances of microaggression, anti-Blackness, and racism on campus and in daily interactions, which affected them socially, emotionally, and academically. According to the participants, instances of microaggression included “overt or covert actions or verbal remarks that impede those that are Black” and “disdain for Black cultural essence.” Other students mentioned “anti-Black interactions” with lab mates, though they did not elaborate further. From stereotypes, biases, and microaggressions in individual encounters to more structural norms like practices, curriculum, and spaces that are not welcoming to Black students, students reported feeling additional stressors and discomfort. Yet, students' experience with diversity and anti-Blackness varied by the departments that they were in, the setting of the labs, and their interactions with faculty members (advisors). For example, a student who described having many students from the African American/African diaspora in their graduate program found great support and advocacy from their advisors that helped "provide opportunities for a better education." While they did not specify the demographic makeup of their academic environment, several students also described “not [having] too many issues with anti-Blackness due to a diverse lab and advisor (Principal Investigator).” For these students, “lab and program play a big part in not having these experiences.” At the same time, students shared that they experienced anti-Blackness in "outdated rules” related to Qualifying Exams and when having “only older, white board[s].” On the other hand, another student had a different experience with anti-Blackness and microaggression in their lab due to their interaction with their lab mates. This shows that, in addition to the general campus climate, the culture of labs and programs plays a big part in graduate students' experience with anti-Blackness on campus.

Contrary to how commonly the participants experienced microaggressions and anti-Blackness at UC Davis, listening sessions revealed that graduate students were often unaware of the resources when they experienced microaggression and anti-Blackness. A participant recalled: “There is a lack of certainty about what can be done when you are experiencing anti-Blackness/racism.” Similarly, other students expressed “difficulty navigating who to report to” or “finding a true ally.” However, a student also shared that “talking about experiences [of microaggression or anti-Blackness] with faculty” helped them to cope with their experiences.

**4.4.2 Community and Safe Spaces for Black Students**

Lack of communication, networking, and a sense of community were common challenges Black graduate students faced in succeeding socially and academically at UC Davis. Black graduate students emphasized the hardship of making a community at UC Davis, expressing that they are looking for a community and spaces to meet other Black graduate students. They also raised a concern that "everyone and everything is so scattered" that students must constantly and actively look for other Black graduate students to form communities.[33]

Students shared practices and resources that they used to be successful in their graduate studies. First, programs that specifically target graduate students of color (Graduate Students of Color Summer Research Award and Graduate Students of Color Mentorship Program) helped students fund their research activities over the summer and provided mentorship opportunities with other graduate students of color. Second, students indicated that events like the Grad Mixer and departmental and other organized events that bring people together (current graduate students, alumni, and advisors) helped them to connect with others and build community. Lastly, students highlighted the importance of Black space to support their success. Students stated that Black spaces are "a way for students of color to come together and discuss things" or to "meet friends and discuss problems with people who look similar." The participants emphasized and appreciated that Black spaces were "safe spaces" for Black students to feel comfortable. These resources echo the challenges that graduate students shared in the earlier subtheme, Challenges in Making Community; Feelings of Isolation.

## Recruitment, Retention and Advancement

**4.4.3 Recruitment and Retention**

Graduate student participants emphasized that the university should focus on retaining Black graduate students rather than recruitment. Recommendations for retention include increasing mentoring programs, funding for graduate student research and tuition, resources for Black student communities, and visibility for students of color. These would foster safe learning spaces for students to network and thrive in their graduate studies. A few graduate student participants also commented on recruitment and graduate student support alongside anti-Blackness that they perceived. One participant shared their perception of enrollment for Black students outside of California, stating that "many White professors don't take Black students due to funding." Their comment alluded to a perception that departmental funding, or the lack thereof, influenced how they saw their peers entering the UC Davis campus at the graduate level. They mentioned that funding may also "possibly play a part in anti-Blackness without intentions of it."

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[33] According to the [2021 Fall Quarter enrollment data at UC Davis](#), only 4.2% of total (continuing and new combined) graduate students (Academic Master, Academic Doctor, and Graduate Professionals) identify as Black or African American. Undergraduate is even lower at 3.8%.

## Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

> **"** *"...There is really no diversity when it's such a small cohort. Although the environment is friendly, not being able to work with people that look like me sometimes leaves me in uncomfortable situations. When going over topics such as AAVE, eyes tend to fall on me which makes me feel uncomfortable."* **"**

**4.4.4 Hypervisibility and Invisibility**

Black graduate student experiences showed both hypervisibility and invisibility in academic settings that caused stress and a sense of isolation. Students expressed that, no matter what they do, they "become a problem"—often singled out, drawing additional attention, and being "called out" unlike their non-Black peers. At the same time, multiple students shared that their academic contributions often were unrecognized, if not dismissed.

## Key Takeaways: Graduate Students

The campus community climate remains a critical area of focus needed to support graduate students, similar to undergraduate students, faculty, and staff at UC Davis. While individual student experiences differed by years in program, lab cultures, advisor-advisee relationships, or departments, participants recalled anti-Blackness and microaggression that they or their peers faced daily. This relates to the hypervisibility of Black student mistakes and the invisibility of Black peers, hard work, and efforts. The findings also indicate that Black graduate students often felt isolated and expressed that they would like a designated safe space for Black students to meet, network, and find a community. These echo themes from other listening sessions that emphasized the importance of community spaces for Black students that can provide community-building and networking opportunities. Other suggestions included increasing graduate student retention through mentorship programs and funding opportunities.

# 4.5 Alumni

> " *"All the numbers are the same, and it's frustrating; I feel like I'm going back to 1961!"* "

Most participants completed their undergraduate studies at UC Davis, although some attended UCD as graduate/professional students. Of the four overarching themes identified throughout all listening sessions, Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging and Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility were the two prominent themes in the Alumni session.

## Community, Climate and Sense of Belonging

### 4.5.1 Isolation and the Importance of Community and Networks

Alumni's past experiences as Black students at UC Davis mirrored the current challenges that Black students at UC Davis face today: a feeling of isolation. While statistics show that UC Davis is relatively diverse, only 4% of the student population identifies as Black/African American.[34] In addition to a lack of Black student enrollment, alumni expressed feeling isolated when the lecture contents did not represent Black experiences.[35] Alumni re-emphasized the importance of community and networks for students because those resources helped them fight the feeling of isolation and find a "family" at UC Davis. Events like the Black Family Day, campus-community collaborations, organizations, programs like ACE[36] and the TRiO Scholars Program[37], and a tight network of Black students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis would strengthen Black/African American/African diasporan networks. Participants expressed the need for more mentorship opportunities to increase Black alumni involvement and connection to UC Davis. Participants proposed an alumni-undergraduate mentorship program where they would have monthly one-on-one advising sessions with the students. They also mentioned that having such "mental [health] check-ins" could benefit both student mentees and alumni mentors by providing a link between alumni and the campus. According to one of the participants, developing trust and connection with a mentor provided them practical and emotional support to get through challenging times at UC Davis.

### 4.5.2 Black Family Day (BFD)

Black Family Day (BFD) was repetitively brought up during the listening sessions to enhance the recruitment and retention of Black students at UC Davis as well as alumni involvement at UC Davis. Many expressed that BFD was the main event that drew them to UC Davis during their college decision period. According to the alumni participants, BFD was a way for the campus to "recruit family *and* students" and to connect to a larger African American/African diasporan network. BFD was also a networking event where students could tour the campus, get involved with the campus community and Black faculty, and begin their initial connection with the university early, even in middle school. The event brought together the African American/African diasporan campus organizations, CSUs, and CCCs alongside Black professional organizations,

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[34] UC Davis Student Profile. 2019. https://www.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/uc-davis-student-profile.pdf
[35] Experiences within the major varied by the content of instruction (e.g., a participant shared that they did not feel as isolated in their major because Black history was taught).
[36] https://srrc.ucdavis.edu/programs/ace#:~:text=ACE's%20Goals,students%20with%20the%20African%20Diaspora
[37] https://opportunity.ucdavis.edu/programs/trio-scholars

elevated visibility and support for the Black student population. It provided a safe space for Black students and families to build networks and find people with "whom they feel they can relate." Alumni also acknowledged challenges to BFD. For example, a participant recalled that, after BFD, the students who returned to campus were shocked to see that "there [were] not many Black folks on campus." In addition, financial and logistical barriers to organizing BFD remain, such having enough funding and space.

## Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility

> " *"All the programs are going on, but if they are not relevant, it is not going to be effective; non-academic factors are also factors for retention."* "

**4.5.3 Uplifting Black Culture and Visibility**

Alumni participants shared how student recruitment, retention, and having more Black faculty and staff could uplift Black culture and the visibility of the African diaspora. An additional community engagement aspect included BFD and having a greater connection off-campus with the Black community in the local region. A recurring theme in the recruitment and retention effort was anti-Blackness and diversity on campus. While UC Davis has some infrastructures to support Black students, alumni recommended UC Davis more culturally relevant interventions to combat racism. They shared that UC Davis needed culturally relevant approaches for students to help them settle and excel academically, as Black students could often go through "culture shock" upon their arrival at UC Davis.

In an academic setting, a participant suggested "increase visibility through more Black faculty, staff, and student groups, as well as highlighting the African/African American studies." On the other hand, other participants also recommended having non-academic ways to uplift Black culture to shape student recruitment and retention. These included supporting local Black-owned businesses such as hairdressers and restaurants and Black music and culture. Another participant further elaborated on culturally relevant interventions that focused on arts: "Black artists, Black designers… STEM is great […], but we could have more artist communities"..."incredibly diverse minds of people come together to create art…[and] culture and ethnicity flourish in the arts." In sum, alumni participants recommend uplifting Black success and culture in both academic and non-academic ways to combat anti-Blackness and increase Black student recruitment and retention at UC Davis.

## Key Takeaways: Alumni

Alumni listening sessions provided a unique perspective beyond the current students, faculty, and staff's experiences. Like the other listening sessions, participants emphasized the importance of community, networking, and resource-sharing through building strong Black professional and community networks, including an alumni-undergraduate mentoring program. One such effort is UC Davis BFD, which participants repetitively mentioned throughout the listening session for their importance in recruitment and retention efforts, community-building, and resource-sharing. In addition to using culturally relevant approaches to help Black students settle and excel academically at UC Davis, the alumni session participants suggested "uplifting Black Culture" and increasing the visibility of Black students, staff, and faculty to combat anti-Blackness on campus and increase Black student enrollment and retention.

# 5. Opportunities to Take Action

The listening sessions highlighted common challenges and successes experienced by Black students, staff, faculty, and alumni at UC Davis. They revealed three determinative factors that can constructively address anti-Blackness: continued investment in effective practices and programs, increased awareness and access to campus offerings, and implementation of new interventions in areas that are neglected. This report recognizes that the work of addressing anti-Blackness and uplifting the African diaspora community at UC Davis did not begin with the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. As such, the report acknowledges the critical work that has already been done by others at UC Davis to highlight Black excellence and address anti-Blackness. The Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion must continue to partner with and build upon that work to positively impact current and future Aggies. Highlighted below are a few efforts conducted by various campus partners in the last several years. This is not an exhaustive list. As part of a future Aggie Black Excellence research project, the IDEA team intends to survey, collect, and take a deep dive into past campus efforts and assess the impact.

## 5.1 Prior Campus Partner Efforts

- **African American Faculty and Staff Association (AAFSA Davis main campus and AAFSA health campus)** supports staff engagement through annual events, including AAFSA/AAFSA Health Winter Social, AAFSA/APASA/LFSA Community Mixer, and the end of the year Spring Celebration, along with a series of webinars focused on professional development and other topics. AAFSA co-hosts an annual Staff & Faculty Appreciation luncheon sponsored by the undergraduate chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.
- **African American and African Studies Department** has a rich history at UC Davis, having recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UC Davis ethnic studies programs in 2019-2020, and offers a robust interdisciplinary curriculum taught by faculty whose diverse research interests provide students the "opportunity to investigate the history and culture of communities of African descent around the world."[38] The department is also deeply engaged in the campus community and "supports many groups and organizations designed to meet the academic and social needs of students of African descent and others at Davis, including the Black sororities and fraternities, the Pan-African Student Association, and pre-professional groups in engineering, law, and medicine as well as the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association. Other events in which the department participates are the Black Fall Welcome, Black History Month Celebration, Black Family Day, the African American and African Graduation Celebration, and the Annual Student Leadership Conference."[39]
- **African Continuum** historically hosts the Black Convocation, an annual awards ceremony to highlight Black excellence and celebrate the accomplishments of UC Davis Black faculty, staff, students, and alumni. As a pivot during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the recognition celebration was held virtually.[40] The African Continuum also hosts special yield efforts focused on admitted undergraduate students and often coordinates community gatherings to bring the

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[38] https://aas.ucdavis.edu/about-us
[39] Ibid.
[40] African Continuum's Award Recipients Carry On Campus Legacies by Dateline Staff August 24, 2021
https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/african-continuums-award-recipients-carry-on-campus-legacies

African diaspora together. This includes facilitating group transportation and providing tickets to UCD-affiliated sporting events such as the Causeway Classic.

- **UC Davis Intercollegiate Athletics** have partnered with entities like the Sacramento Kings[41] and UC Davis staff and faculty for social events where Black student athletes at UC Davis can network and enjoy fellowship with Black professionals, faculty, and staff.[42]
- **CAMPSSAH** "builds on the Impact Recruitment Initiative (IRI), whose origin was in the call for greater numbers of faculty whose teaching, research, and service focused on the experiences, contributions and aspirations of African American and African diaspora students and communities."[43]
- **Cross Cultural Center** hosted the first in-person Black Family Day[44] since the COVID-19, pandemic, addressing a key theme from alumni findings to continue this tradition that was first launched in the Spring of 1971.[45] With the theme "Black Family Day! B(l)ack Together Again," the 2023 BFD (held on May 23rd) brought together alumni, staff, faculty, students, and community members from across the state for a day of celebration that included a vendor fair of Black-owned businesses, tabling from Black UC Davis student organizations, live music and dance performances. The day culminated with a Stompfest from the Divine 9 Black Greek letter organizations.[46]
- **Student Affairs Lifting Black Voices** project hosted a series of activities between 2021-2023 to address anti-Blackness in support of Black staff in their division, including:
  - Collaboration with the White Accountability and Anti Racism Collective
  - Presentation by Dr. Kathy Obear "Recognizing, Interrupting, and Revising Unproductive Dynamics of Whiteness and White Supremacy Culture"
  - Book Discussions: *How to Be An Anti-Racist* by Ibraim Kendi
  - Lifting Black Voices Annual Retreat
  - USC Racial Equity Institute Participation
  - Speaker: Shaun Harper, *Advancing Racial Justice & Racial Equity in Student Affairs*
  - African American Network Newsletter[47]
- **Undergraduate Admissions and Enrollment** regularly conducts targeted outreach, recruitment, and yield efforts focused on the enrollment of more Black students in collaboration with various campus partners, including some mentioned above. Efforts include African American yield receptions hosted at the Chancellor's residence and a virtual Black Excellence Symposium, "a meaningful and inspiring event, as we acknowledged the collective achievements of our African Diaspora Community."[48]
- **The Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS)**: Established in October 2015, CADSS[49] serves the undergraduate students of the African diaspora at UC Davis by providing space, academic tools, resources, mentorship, and a community network of support. CADSS spearheads events such as the Black Fall Welcome, LFA, and Black Futures Month alongside other community

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[41] https://sacramentokings.formstack.com/forms/dei_workshop

[42] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk731/files/inline-files/BFS%20%2B%20SA%20Social.pdf

[43] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/campssah

[44] Black Family Day 2023. https://ccc.ucdavis.edu/programs-and-services/culture-days/black-family-day

[45] https://ccc.ucdavis.edu/programs-and-services/culture-days/black-family-day

[46] https://csi.ucdavis.edu/nphc/

[47] https://studentaffairs.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk486/files/inline-files/AANN-Winter2016.pdf

[48] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/constituent-groups/aafsa

[49] https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/african-diaspora-student-center-hub-new-uc-davis-initiatives

events in collaboration with campus entities such as the Black Leadership Retreat and BFD. CADSS also hosted the annual Black Graduation Celebration[50].

- **Black Student Activism** played a central role in addressing anti-Blackness and advocating for Black student excellence at UC Davis. Following the founding of ethnic studies programs through the Third World Liberation Front Strike,[51] Davis BSU leaders—Stan Oden, Ranya Alexander, Mel Posey, and Charles Smith—met with the campus administration to establish what is known today as the African and African American Studies Department. Likewise, Black student activist groups historically have been engaged in their campus community to identify key issues that Black students have faced.[52] They have mobilized to communicate the Black student community's demands to campus administrations to address their concerns. On February 22, 2016, Black student activists presented to the chancellor and campus leadership a list of demands to enhance the safety and well-being of Black students where Black faculty and staff supported them in solidarity. In response, UC Davis Chancellor Katehi issued a letter on February 29, 2016, which responded to each of the items listed in the order received.
- **UC Davis has registered student organizations that actively serve the African diaspora community on campus and the local region** through outreach, student support, and involvement on the campus and in the wider community. Below are a few of the Black registered student organizations, including the historically African American sororities and fraternities at UC Davis, that are part of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) and commonly known as the Divine 9.[53] A complete list of organizations can be found on the Center for Student Involvement's website.[54]

**Student Organizations**

Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi)
Black Campus Ministries
Black Engineers Association (BEA)
Black Graduates and Professional Student Association (BGPSA)
Black Student Union
Black Intellectuals Graduating
BlackOUT
Habesha Student Union
Imani Clinic
Impact Movement
Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS)
Muslim Student Association

Nigerian Student Association
Nigerian Student Dance Group
Pan African Student Organization (PASO)
Student National Medical Association

**Fraternities and Sororities**
Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc.
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

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[50] https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/graduation
[51] https://aas.ucdavis.edu/not-whether-how
[52] Select issues included the following: low graduation rates, small presence of African American student population compared to the larger campus student population, incidents of hate on campus, and a need to decrease attrition and increase retention and excellence of African American students. (UC Davis Student Affairs, 2015).
[53] https://csi.ucdavis.edu/nphc/
[54] https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/resources/student-organizations

# 5.2 DEI Efforts

Since the conclusion of the listening sessions in June 2022 leading up to and during the 2022-2023 academic year, efforts by the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) responded to some of the listening session findings to address anti-Blackness at UC Davis. This section outlines those efforts and others in progress. Additionally, based on the listening sessions, the report identifies future opportunities for DEI to lead and/or champion in collaboration with campus partners to support the broader African diasporic community as well as specific opportunities to support Black staff, faculty, and students and enhance alumni engagement at UC Davis. To make a long-term and sustained impact, this must be a collective campus effort.

**5.2.1 What Has Been Done in 2022-2023**
- March 16-19, 2022. The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) conference was attended by a delegation of nearly 50 UC Davis faculty and staff, primarily from DEI and Undergraduate Education and Enrollment Management. Many were from the African diaspora, and some presented their work and research. DEI also hosted a reception for networking and community building opportunity.
- May 24, 2022. Ebony Lewis, *IDEA Brown Bag: Why Black Students Say No to UC Davis*. Dr. Lewis shares key findings and recommendations from her 2021 study[55] that explored why African American first-year students admitted to UC Davis declined their offer of admission.
- November 18, 2022. "Young, Gifted, and Black" exhibit at the Manetti Shrem Museum and Sacramento Area Youth Speaks (SAYS) poetry slam at the DEI Open House. Aggie Black Excellence project collaborated with Student Affairs' (SA) Lifting Black Voices project, a project aimed at addressing the impact of anti-Blackness among their staff, to develop a segment highlighting Black excellence.
- January 30-June 25, 2023. DEI and SA partnered with the Manetti Shrem Museum on the "Mike Henderson: Before the Fire, 1965-1985" exhibition to highlight Black excellence.
- January 25, 2023. Aggie Black Excellence and AAFSA Mixer at the Aggie Square Launch. The event also connected the UC Davis UC Black Administrators' Council (UCBAC) delegation.
- February 27-28, 2023. DEI coordinated sending a Delegation of UC Davis faculty and staff to the 2023 UC Black Administrators Council (UCBAC) Conference hosted at UC Riverside.
- April 18, 2023. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and DEI Reception and event co-sponsor.
- June 4, 2023. Yolo Juneteenth Festival was hosted for the second consecutive year on the UC Davis campus, organized by the Yolo County Library, Umoja, and the UC Davis Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Building on the theme, "Together We Heal," DEI's Aggie Black Excellence presented on healing as a community through the music, academic scholarship and research, community engagement, poetry/spoken word, and dance. DEI collaborated with UC Davis School of Education (Dr. Faheemah N. Mustafaa), AAFSA (Health and UC Davis main campus), SAYS, and Kast Academy.
- June 21, 2023. The IDEA hosted a book talk with Dr. Rachel Jean-Baptiste on her book, *Multiracial Identities in Colonial French Africa*, followed by ABE/AAFSA Faculty and Staff Mixer. The event was co-sponsored by a series of campus partners including AAFSA and Manetti Shrem Museum.
- June 26-27, 2023. ABE and Student Affairs Lifting Black Voices (LBV) project partnered with the

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[55] (Lewis, 2021)

UCD Wheelhouse Institute to host a presentation on "Transformational Innovations at UC Davis for Black Community Success" to nearly 17 Black California Community College Presidents/CEOs during their retreat held at the Davis campus. ABE and LBV also co-hosted "Pathway to Presidency: Black Presidents Speak Panel," a lunchtime professional development opportunity supporting Black staff. The panel featured six Black presidents including three UCD alumni.

- June 30-July 2, 2023. The IDEA team served as campus liaison with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. to host the Western Province Kappa League conference UC Davis. With a partnership with the Undergraduate Admissions, the event hosted 105 young men of color (primarily Black) for three days and two nights for leadership development, fellowship, and college preparation.

- "In 2021, UC Davis partnered with lead agencies in three regions: Redwood Coast (lead agency: Cal Poly Humboldt), North State (lead agency: Shasta College), and Sacramento (lead agency: Los Rios Community College District) to apply for grants under this opportunity. Subsequently, UC Davis was delighted to learn that it is a collaborator in all three regions."[56] Along with being a sub-awardee, DEI serves as the campus liaison for these three regional collaboratives. includes active engagement regional planning and partnerships by way of working groups, steering committees, and other activities. Through the Sacramento Regional Collaborative,[57] DEI is able to support Black student outreach, recruitment and retention given the Sacramento region's large African American population and will increase investment in programs such as SAYS and Improve Your Tomorrow (IYT) who primarily serve students of color, with a large portion of their participants coming from the African diaspora.

- DEI increased support for CADSS along with campus programs that serve students in academic units such as Leadership in Engineering Advancement, Diversity and Retention (LEADR), [58] AvenueB,[59] and the Black Law Students Association.[60]

- **Aggie Black Excellence Website as an online information Hub (in progress)** – In late spring 2023, the IDEA began the process of expanding the current Aggie Black Excellence webpage to serve as an online "information hub" and a one-stop shop/landing page for all things Black at UC Davis. This hub will become an area for current and/or future Black students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members to stay informed, connect to listservs, and to find information, resources, events, and activities pertaining to the African diaspora at UC Davis. We intend to include a calendar that highlights key events/activities taking place virtually or in-person at any UC Davis locations (i.e., an expanded year-long version of DEI's Black History 2023).[61]

- **Faculty Recruitment (in progress) [62] -** In October 2022, UC Davis undertook an institution-wide effort to recruit 100 new faculty members with a renewed emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, in which DEI played a key role. The project is a collaboration between the Office of the Provost, DEI, and Strategic Communications. The ongoing recruitment effort seeks to diversify faculty at UC Davis and to further the mission to better educate and serve the student body at UC Davis.

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[56] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/k16-collaborative

[57] https://sacramentok16.org/

[58] https://engineering.ucdavis.edu/undergraduates/leadr-program

[59] https://avenueb.ucdavis.edu/

[60] https://students.law.ucdavis.edu/blsa/

[61] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/black-history-month-2023

[62] "A Renewed Emphasis on Diversity in Faculty Hiring" by Cody Kitaura October 11, 2022 www.ucdavis.edu/news/renewed-emphasis-diversity-faculty-hiring

**5.2.2 Future Opportunities to Take Action**

**Support for the Broader African Diasporic/Black Community at UC Davis**

1. **Highlight Black Excellence** - Continue to celebrate, highlight, and elevate the exposure of Black excellence across the UC Davis campus by recognizing the achievements and influence of Black staff, faculty, students, and alumni. Elevate in spaces including but not exclusive to the African Continuum, AAFSA, Student Affairs Lifting Black Voices, and student organizations such as Delta Sigma Theta. Take a strategic and comprehensive approach that includes all colleges and divisions to authentically elevate the contributions of the UC Davis African diasporic community through their communications channels.

2. **Aggie Black Excellence Advisory Board** - Establish a campus-wide Aggie Black Excellence Advisory Board aimed at prioritizing strategies and recommending specific action plans to improve the experience of students, staff, and faculty of the African diaspora at UC Davis. This aligns with the recommendation included in Lewis (2021) to establish a "formal campus-wide Black/African Diaspora initiative overseen by a corresponding taskforce, similar to the current HSI taskforce, for investigating Black student representation and experiences at UCD from enrollment through matriculation" (p. 167), and should include campus leadership, staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, alumni, representatives of campus diversity committees and Employee Resource Groups (i.e., AAFSA, The African Continuum) and community partners. To support undergraduate students, this would also involve partnering with the UC Davis Student Success and Equitable Outcomes Task Force [63] established in January 2023. The advisory board will also function to strengthen institutional accountability.

3. **Accountability** - Supplement solutions implemented to address anti-Blackness with intuitional evaluation measures that serve to document and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts for long-term sustainability.

4. **Black Pages** - Update and circulate the Black Pages[64] (print and electronic), a resource developed by UC Davis SA with inputs from various community stakeholders including student organizations. Black Pages initially began as a document similar to the Yellow Pages with names, phone numbers, and office numbers of Black community members, which later evolved to serve the entire African diaspora community at UC Davis, the external audiences, and future Aggies. "This guide will help you explore the African and African American community on campus. In The Black Pages, you'll find culturally relevant resources, information on student organizations and academic support and advice to help you succeed in all aspects at Davis."[65]

5. **DEI Culture and Training** - Provide more institutional support for DEI workshops, practices, and culture. Leverage, bring to scale, and expand existing strategic DEI Investments and innovations[66] to document, address, and support the needs and challenges affecting advancement of Black faculty, students, and staff.

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[63] UC Davis Student Success and Equitable Outcomes Task Force.
https://leadership.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1166/files/media/documents/Charge%20Letter%20Student%20Success%20and%20Equitable%20Outcomes%20Task%20Force.pdf
[64] The Black Pages: The African Diaspora Student Experience. 2018. https://www.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/home-site/admissions/documents/uc-davis-cultural-guides-black-pages.pdf
[65] The Black Pages: The African Diaspora Student Experience. 2020.
https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1701/files/inline-files/The%20Black%20Pages_1.pdf
[66] https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/dei-strategic-investments

6. **Increasing Black Visibility** - Recognize and celebrate Black achievement, excellence, social lives, and communities in various channels of campus communication. This includes creating an extensive communication network to foster a strong sense of community.
7. **Community Building** - Create more opportunities to bring students and the Black community together to see each other and connect. Disconnection was exacerbated in part by periods of quarantine and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students started their first years at UC Davis in isolation.

**Support for Staff**

1. **Professional Development** - Take a culturally competent approach to staff development by creating, promoting, and making existing relevant opportunities for Black staff, such as access to additional education, sponsorship, management involvement for growth, training, and certification programs. Actively create opportunities to showcase staff development, growth, and demonstration of their talent.
2. **Mentorship** - Establish a strong Black professional mentorship program through new and existing campus and systemwide programs in collaboration with Employee Resource Groups. Example: Through the UC Davis Group Mentoring Program, [67] establish an annual AAFSA-sponsored employee mentorship program that pairs Black staff across UC Davis and UC Davis Health as mentors/mentees. Focus on actionable items for Black/African American staff mentorship. Also consider and explore sponsorship ideas in Black/African American staff career development.
3. **Data** - Increase accountability and transparency by providing data on campus workforce diversity (e.g., faculty and staff demographics, wage breakdown by race and ethnicity).
4. **Campus Partnerships** - Expand Aggie Black Excellence collaboration with the Student Affairs Lifting Black Voices project. Identify and partner with other campus divisions and departments on projects/initiatives engaged in addressing anti-Blackness.
5. **Networking Opportunities** - Create and publicize formal and informal networking opportunities within/across and throughout the UC system to assist staff in finding professional communities and collaborators (e.g., UC Black Administrators Council, Council of UC Staff Assemblies).
6. **Staff Recruitment and Recognition** - Improve the Black staff recruitment pipeline through outreach programs to universities and HBCUs. Also, make more deliberate efforts to seek out and support Black professionals in their research endeavors. Further, establish a linear focus on Black needs at UC Davis.
7. **DEI Training** - Foster a healthy and accountable campus professional community committed to addressing anti-Blackness in the workspace through mandatory DEI training and resources for supervisors and managers on topics ranging from staff hiring to workplace climate.
8. **More Research on Staff Experiences** - Further investigate and research staff experiences on different intersecting identities such as race, gender, and immigration so as not to overlook these experiences in diversity, equity, and advancement efforts.

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[67] https://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/learning/programs/group-mentoring

**Support for Faculty**

1. **Faculty Mentorship and Advancement** - Establish new or leverage existing faculty mentorship programs, resources, and opportunities to support the professional development and career advancement to tenured professorship of Black faculty at UC Davis. This includes the following:
   a. Strengthen and promote existing faculty support programs such as the campus partnership with the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development (NCFDD).
   b. Expand campus sponsorship for Black faculty to participate in NCFDD's Faculty Success Program (FSP) formerly known as Faculty Bootcamp. [68] UC Davis has an institutional membership which provides all faculty and graduate students access to numerous NCFDD's professional development resources at no cost. However, there is a cost for participation in the FSP which several listening session attendees previously completed (or are currently participating in). Despite the benefits and the FSP being highly recommended, not all participants were aware of this opportunity.
   c. Model and upscale faculty mentorship programs such as PROMISE Engineering Institute (PEI) at UC Davis [69] to a campus-wide program to support faculty networking and professional development.
2. **Networking and Community Building** – Increase opportunities to support networking and community building among Black faculty in the following areas:
   a. Informal community building opportunities for Black faculty to come together and support each other, discuss their unique needs, and create a sense of belonging. We observed that the listening sessions served as a space to network and exchange information.
   b. Professional networking events to enhance Black scholar visibility, professional community building and inter-department collaborations.
3. **Recruitment and Retention** - Expand resources like the Capital Resource Network for recruitment and retention of new Black faculty to make their transition to UC Davis smoother.
4. **DEI Faculty Service** - Explore and identify opportunities within the tenure review process to recognize "invisible labor" or Black faculty in teaching, research, public service contributions, and professional activities that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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[68] https://www.facultydiversity.org/fsp-bootcamp
[69] https://pei.ucdavis.edu/

**Support for Undergraduate Students**

1. **Data Access** - Provide registered Black student organizations access to student data or rosters to outreach more effectively to new and continuing Black students. This will improve and expand communications across the African diaspora, strengthen community connections, and provide Black students with a greater sense of belonging.

2. **Communication Strategy** - Develop a communication strategy to: 1) seamlessly connect faculty, students, staff and alumni; 2) increase awareness of listservs for different affinity spaces and campus resources; and 3) strengthen opportunities for engagement in academic, social, and community activities including targeted welcome messages to incoming students upon initial enrollment to complement existing efforts.

3. **Greater Investment in Black Student Success Programs** - Scale-up existing programs and interventions that show promise or demonstrate a positive impact in supporting Black student success, such as LFA and the Black Leadership Ambassadors for Culture and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) program.[70] Expand Black student success support programs beyond STEM areas into the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

4. **Greater Awareness and Understanding of the Admissions Process** - The findings reflect a need for UC Davis to provide greater awareness and understanding to potential students and their families about the admissions and enrollment process to clarify any misperceptions that exist.

5. **DEI Training and Curriculum** - Increase DEI awareness and training through formal and informal methods to improve student experiences and interactions in academic and non-academic spaces. This includes revising existing and developing new in-person mandatory workshops and virtual modules, along with integrating DEI principles and information into the undergraduate course curriculum. In addition, develop and provide resources on best practices to be shared with and adopted by faculty and TAs to support a healthy, welcoming, and inclusive academic environment in classrooms, labs, and discussion sections.

6. **Black Staff and Faculty** - Recruit and retain Black staff so students can see themselves in the people supporting them.

7. **Culturally Relevant Approaches** - Implement culturally relevant approaches to orient Black students and help them excel academically.

8. **Increase Black Student Enrollment and Retention -** Uplift Black success and culture in academic and non-academic ways to combat anti-Blackness on campus and increase Black student recruitment and retention.

9. **Student Housing and Living Spaces** - Partner with Student Housing to identify new communal spaces and housing locations for Black students' AAA Living-Learning Community.

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[70] https://cadss.ucdavis.edu/programs/Black-male-mentoring

**Support for Graduate Students**

1. **Institutionalize Support to Keep Community Space for Black Graduate and Professional Students** - Promote and further support community spaces for Black graduate students, such as BGPSA. Since BGPSA is a student organization, graduate students expressed balancing their academic responsibilities with managing this space in a volunteer capacity as student-leaders. In addition, the leadership transition for BGPSA is challenging due to time and service demands, limited funding, and lack of incentives. Institutionalized support, such as the assistance from the Aggie Black Excellence Advisory Board or a dedicated space for BGPSA, can alleviate the burden that BGPSA and its student leaders face to keep this community space available for Black scholars.

2. **Activities to Build Formal Relationships Between Black Groups and Organizations** - Provide joint programs, activities, and mixers for all members of the Black community across UCD locations (undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, faculty, and alumni) to strengthen the relationships between different Black organizations and groups (i.e., 2023 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and DEI Reception and event co-sponsor).

3. **Communication Presence** – Leverage other modes of communication including social media platforms to elevate Black graduate student presence at UC Davis, strengthen connections, and increase awareness of the activities, opportunities, and events across the African diaspora. A number of Black graduate students join UC Davis through the UC-HBCU partnership, yet coming to a new state and a university often considered a PWI can be daunting. Increased community connection can help offset feelings of isolation and improve student retention.

4. **Collaborations Across Different Campus Entities and Resources** - Increase collaboration across student community centers, organizations, and departments to further support Black graduate student success.

5. **Networking Events for Black Graduate Students** - Organize and promote events, such as graduate student welcome events or the Grad Mixer, where Black students or students of color can network across disciplines and build connections.

6. **Funding Opportunities and Initiatives for Black Graduate Students and Faculty** - Expand funding opportunities for Black graduate students and faculty. Many internal fellowships require residency in California, leaving many out-of-state and international Black graduate students facing financial burdens and a lack of funding.

7. **Culture of Diversity Awareness and Inclusion** - Create a culture of diversity awareness and inclusion in labs and departments.

8. **Accountability for DEI in Graduate Studies** - Greater involvement from Graduate Studies in efforts to support the success and advancement of Black graduate students. Participants described many efforts that supported Black graduate students came from cultural identity centers, student organizations, and DEI-focused offices at the University. There is an opportunity for Graduate Studies, in partnership with other offices, to proactively identify creative ways to serve the Black graduate student population so they do not feel burdened to initiate these community opportunities.

**Support for Alumni**

Opportunities to support alumni engagement

1. **Black Family Day and Black Community Networks –** Continue to support BFD and other regional community events to build and tighten a network of Black students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis and strengthen African diaspora networks locally and nationally. Hold events that encourage members of the African Diaspora show up as their full authentic selves and celebrate their identities.
2. **Alumni-Student Mentorship Program -** Establish an alumni-student mentorship program to strengthen connection between the alumni community and the current undergraduate and graduate student population at UC Davis. The program could include monthly one-on-one check-ins and larger community gatherings.[71]
3. **Black Spaces Alumni-Undergraduate Mentorship -** Identify or make more spaces (on and off-campus) accessible for Black students, mentors, and community members to gather.

Opportunities to further support Black students based on alumni feedback

1. **Culturally Relevant Approaches for Black Students** - Implement culturally relevant approaches for Black students to help them settle and to excel academically at UC Davis.
2. **Expanding Black Student Success Support Programs** - Expand Black student success support programs beyond STEM areas into arts, humanities, and social sciences.
3. **Uplifting Black Success and Culture -** Uplift Black success and culture in academic and non-academic ways to combat anti-Blackness on campus and increase Black student recruitment and retention.
4. **University Partnership with the City of Davis for Black Businesses** - Strengthen UC Davis' partnership with the City of Davis to increase Black businesses and enable business owners to help students' sense of belonging in a larger community setting outside of the university.
5. **Integrated Communications Strategy -** Explore opportunities and corresponding tools to monitor academic progress and support Black student success through the student journey from recruitment through graduation. Potential tools would also connect UCD graduates with alumni/donor networks for continued support and community engagement.

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[71] "The alumni mentors can provide career guidance, encouragement during the academic program, advice on important course and field work, and opportunities to make professional contacts...Often alumni want to become involved in activities that further promote and serve the university, and being a mentor allows them to become involved." (Pfeifer, 2002).

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# Appendix A – Definition of Terms

Below are key terms used throughout the report.

- **Anti-Blackness** is ideas about practices around negativity, racism, and inequity of Black people or people of African descent. *Upon review of various definitions and assessing the objectives of the Aggie Black Excellence project, this is how the IDEA team defined anti-Blackness. There are numerous definitions of anti-Blackness. As a relatively recent term, the UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence[72] also defines anti-Blackness as "actions or behaviors that minimize, marginalize or devalue the full participation of Black people in life."
- **Microaggression** is a subtle, everyday interaction that expresses bias towards marginalized groups. It can be intentional or unintentional.
- **Institutional** refers to characteristics and qualities related to UC Davis as an institution. For example, "institutional support" means support that pertains to—and is provided by—UC Davis as an institution.
- **Tokenism** refers to a perfunctory or symbolic effort to create a notion of fairness in a diverse higher education setting.
- **Hypervisibility and Invisibility.** Visibility refers to the extent to which an individual is fully regarded and recognized by others. However, visibility can be constraining and disempowering when individuals or groups are made hypervisible (Brighenti, 2007; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Hypervisibility results from an individual being recognized for their 'otherness' or deviance from the norm. Invisibility often disadvantages marginalized group members by denying them recognition, legitimacy, authority, and voice (Lewis & Simpson, 2010; Simpson & Lewis, 2005; Settles et al., 2019).
- **Excellence** refers to academic and professional accomplishments and achievements. The report contextualizes this to the success of members who identify as members of the African American/African diaspora.
- **Imposter Syndrome** is a psychological tendency and a feeling of self-doubt and insecurity about one's skills and accomplishments despite high achievement (Clance & Imes, 1978). For example, during the listening sessions, some students and professionals shared not feeling qualified to be at UC Davis despite their academic and professional excellence and capability.
- **Deficit Thinking** is when people attribute a person's struggle to their personal and internal deficiencies or shortcomings rather than other structural forces that may shape their performance (Valencia, 1997). People may internalize deficit thinking in both educational and professional contexts.
- **African Diaspora, Black, and/or African American** are used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to those who identify as "having origins of any of the Black racial groups of Africa" (UCOP Staff Diversity, n.d., p. 2). This includes those who identify as African American, African, Caribbean, and others of African descent, aligning with the Student Collection and Report at UC.[73]

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[72] https://inclusion.uci.edu/action-plan/msi/uci-black-thriving-initiative/confronting-anti-black-racism/change-the-culture/

[73] Student Ethnicity Collection and Reporting at UC (March 1, 2017, UC Institutional Research). In this FAQ they define how race/ethnicity is defined and collected on the UC Admissions Application for the purpose of US Department of Education report. For the African diaspora, this information is reported as follows: African American / Black includes: African American, African,

# Appendix B – Demographics 2021-2022

**Black Undergraduate and Graduate Students**

The following series of figures show the demographic snapshot of undergraduate students and graduate students. In the 2021-2022 Academic Year, out of 31,657 total undergraduate students, 3.8% (approximately 1,202 students) identified as Black or African American (Figure 1). Out of 8,280 total graduate students, 4.2% (approximately 348 students) identified as Black or African American (Figure 2).

**Figure 1**

*Undergraduate Student Snapshot AY 2021-2022*

Year: 2021  Campus: Davis  Subcampus: None  Level: Undergraduate  Program: All

Enrollments:  31,657



| California residency | |
|---|---|
| CA resident | 82.6% |
| Nonresident international | 13.3% |
| Nonresident domestic | 4.2% |

| | |
|---|---|
| Pell grant (UG only) | 33% |
| First generation (UG only) | 39% |

| Gender identity | |
|---|---|
| Female | 59.5% |
| Male | 39.0% |
| Genderqueer or Nonbinary Gender | 0.6% |
| Not reported | 0.5% |
| Trans Male/Trans Man | 0.2% |
| Trans Female/Trans Woman | 0.1% |
| Different Identity | 0.1% |

| Sexual orientation | |
|---|---|
| Heterosexual or straight | 82% |
| Unknown | 8% |
| Bisexual | 8% |
| Gay or lesbian | 3% |

| Race/ethnicity | |
|---|---|
| African American | 3.8% |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 22.6% |
| American Indian | 0.3% |
| Pacific Islander | 0.4% |
| Asian | 33.8% |
| White | 21.4% |
| Domestic unknown | 2.3% |
| International | 15.5% |

*Note.* University of California Information Center - Fall Enrollment at Glance

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Black Caribbean, Other African American/Black. https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/sites/default/files/Race-Eth%20Data%20Collection.pdf

**Figure 2**

*Graduate Student Snapshot AY 2021-2022*

Year: 2021  Campus: Davis  Subcampus: None  Level: Graduate   Program: All

Enrollments: 8,280

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **California residency** | CA resident 59.4% | **Race/ethnicity** |
| | Nonresident international 20.2% | African American 4.2% |
| | Nonresident domestic 5.7% | Hispanic/Latino(a) 12.9% |
| | Residency unknown 14.7% | American Indian 1.0% |
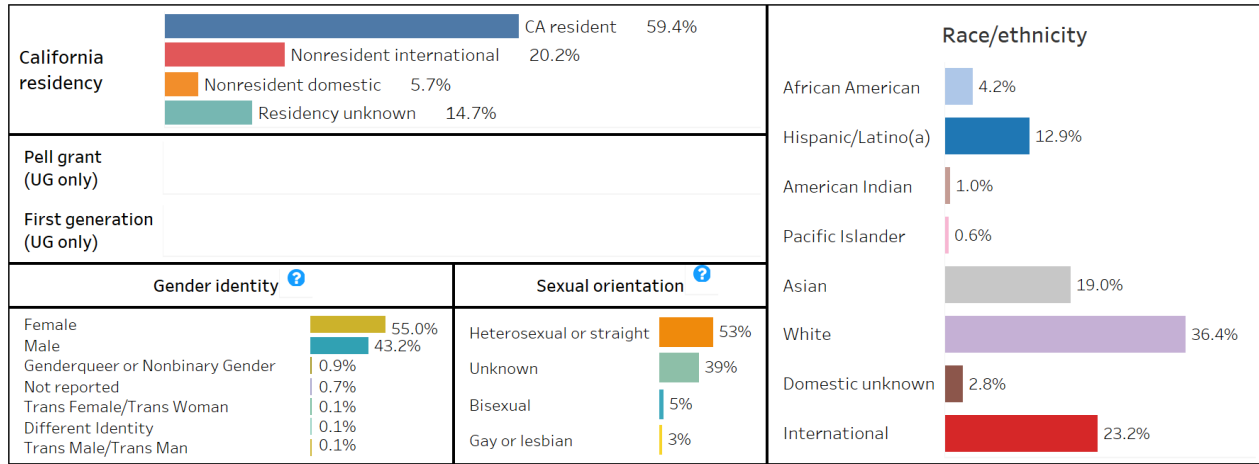


*Note.* University of California Information Center - Fall Enrollment at Glance.

**Black Staff**

The following figure and definition pertain to the Black staff population at UC Davis Health and the main campus. Based on the descriptions of the employee survey glossary, staff includes employees in the senior management group (SMG), managers and senior professionals (MSP) program, and professional and support staff (PSS) and program (excluding student employees). Race/ethnicity refers to self-identified racial or ethnic identity, and the respondents can select more than one response. Out of 20,346 total staff at both UC Davis Health and the main campus, 6.9% (approximately 1,404 staff) identified as Black or African American (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*All Staff Employee Headcount*



UC Davis Workforce Diversity

UC Davis is committed to cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment that values the unique contributions of all university employees and aspires to our Principles of Community. We aim to establish a vibrant community that promotes a sense of belonging for all members of UC Davis. We continually seek to improve our demographic diversity, promote inclusive excellence for all our employees, and provide an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation and intimidation.

*All Staff* Employee Headcount

| | October 2019 | October 2020 | October 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 18,442 | 18,811 | 20,346 |

*All Staff* Percentage by Gender (October, 2021)

| Women | 62.7% |
| Men | 31.0% |
| Nonbinary or Different Identity | 0.4% |
| Decline to State or Left Blank | 5.9% |

*All Staff* Gender Trend

| October, 2019 | October, 2020 | October, 2021 |
| 60.6% | 62.0% | 62.7% |
| 30.8% | 30.7% | 31.0% |

*All Staff* Percentage by Race/Ethnicity (October, 2021)

| Hispanic/Latinx | 17.6% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 1.3% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.7% |
| Black/African-American | 6.9% |
| Asian | 21.0% |
| White | 45.4% |
| Two or more selected | 2.0% |
| Unknown | 3.4% |
| International | 1.7% |

*All Staff* Race/Ethnicity Trend

| October, 2019 | October, 2020 | October, 2021 |
| 15.8% | 16.4% | 17.6% |
| 7.0% | 6.9% | 6.9% |
| 20.4% | 20.6% | 21.0% |
| 49.6% | 47.9% | 45.4% |

*All Staff* Age Distribution (October, 2021)

Under 25: 5.2% | 25 - 34: 30.1% | 35 - 44: 32.4% | 45 - 54: 25.3% | 55 - 64: 17.8% | 65 - 74: 2.8% | Over 75: 0.2%

*All Staff* % Reported Disability Status

**6.2%**

*All Staff* % Reported Veteran Status

**2.8%**

*All Staff* Average Years of Service (All UCs)

**8.2 Years**

*Note.* AggieDash UC Davis Workforce Diversity Dashboard

**Black Faculty and Academic Employees**

Academic employees include faculty (ladder-rank and equivalent, clinical/in-residence, lecturers), researchers, postdoctoral scholars, medical interns and residents, and other academic employees. Ladder-rank and equivalent refer to assistant professors, associate professors, professors, lecturers with potential security of employment (LPSOE), and lecturers with security or employment (LSOE).[74]

Out of 4,731 total academics in both UC Davis Health and the main campus, 2.1% (approximately 99 academics) identified as Black or African American (Figure 4). 2.5% of the total Ladder-rank or equivalent faculty at UC Davis identified as Black or African American (Figure 5).

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[74] UC Davis Workforce Diversity Dashboard Terminologies and Definitions.
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uGqeed6CJjr9hopg0B8e5A1g2vBmFlre

**Figure 4**

*All Academics Headcount*



*Note.* From AggieDash, UC Davis Workforce Diversity Dashboard

**Figure 5**

*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
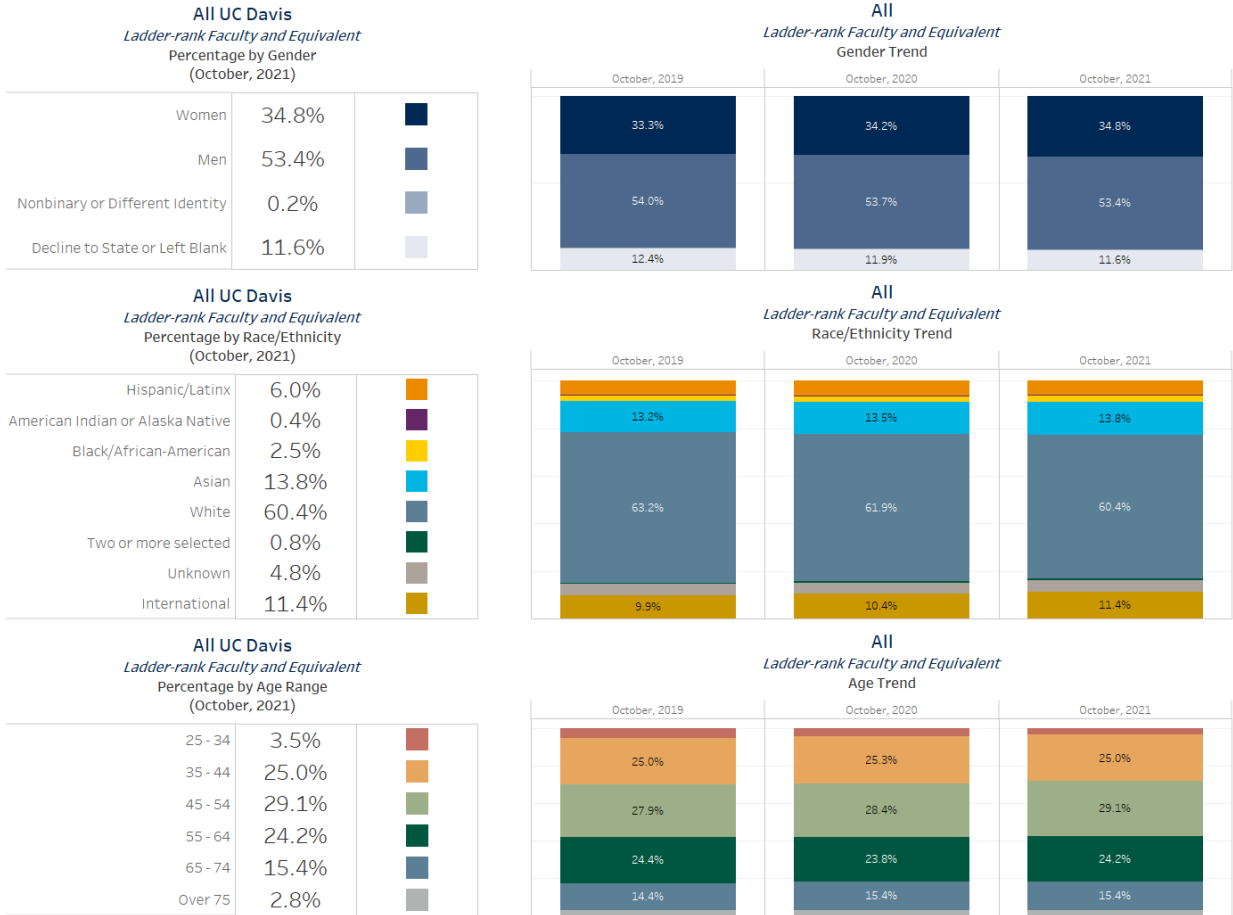
UC Davis Workforce Diversity - Compare Organization Demographics
Compare employee types and organizations by using the selection menus below. Any selections with less than 20 employees will not be displayed.

1. Compare a selected organization with all employees of the selected employee type:   All

2. Choose an employee type to compare:   Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent

**All UC Davis**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Percentage by Gender
(October, 2021)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Women | 34.8% | |
| Men | 53.4% | |
| Nonbinary or Different Identity | 0.2% | |
| Decline to State or Left Blank | 11.6% | |

**All**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Gender Trend

| October, 2019 | October, 2020 | October, 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| 33.3% | 34.2% | 34.8% |
| 54.0% | 53.7% | 53.4% |
| 12.4% | 11.9% | 11.6% |

**All UC Davis**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Percentage by Race/Ethnicity
(October, 2021)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic/Latinx | 6.0% | |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.4% | |
| Black/African-American | 2.5% | |
| Asian | 13.8% | |
| White | 60.4% | |
| Two or more selected | 0.8% | |
| Unknown | 4.8% | |
| International | 11.4% | |

**All**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Race/Ethnicity Trend

| October, 2019 | October, 2020 | October, 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| 13.2% | 13.5% | 13.8% |
| 63.2% | 61.9% | 60.4% |
| 9.9% | 10.4% | 11.4% |

**All UC Davis**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Percentage by Age Range
(October, 2021)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 25 - 34 | 3.5% | |
| 35 - 44 | 25.0% | |
| 45 - 54 | 29.1% | |
| 55 - 64 | 24.2% | |
| 65 - 74 | 15.4% | |
| Over 75 | 2.8% | |

**All**
*Ladder-rank Faculty and Equivalent*
Age Trend

| October, 2019 | October, 2020 | October, 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| 25.0% | 25.3% | 25.0% |
| 27.9% | 28.4% | 29.1% |
| 24.4% | 23.8% | 24.2% |
| 14.4% | 15.4% | 15.4% |

*Note.* From AggieDash, UC Davis Workforce Diversity Dashboard.

# Appendix C - Methodology

**Why Community Listening Sessions?**

       Community listening sessions provide an opportunity for the IDEA team to gather community feedback while maintaining a focus group-like format. The objective was to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for more informal or semi-formal community conversations rather than a formal interview-like atmosphere with researcher-participant relationships. This method is particularly useful given the topics discussed, the purpose of meaningful community engagement, and narrative sharing with a degree of rapport and trust[75] for participants to share their personal experiences and observations.

**Participants**

       Participants were identified with the help of campus partners. For example, IDEA partnered with the Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS) and Student Affairs (SA) to promote undergraduate listening sessions as they also reached out to Black student organizations on campus. Other channels included but were not limited to African Diaspora Cultivating Education (ACE) and listservs that specifically serve African American communities at UC Davis. For outreach to faculty, IDEA gathered a list of faculty who identify as a member of the African diaspora and sent out email invitations for the listening session. Similar collaborations occurred for the other listening sessions to maximize outreach and participation of our target participant population. While registration was not mandatory, participants were encouraged to register in advance via an online registration form developed through the Zoom platform. Participants who did not pre-register were asked to fill out a printed version of the registration form and/or complete the online registration form upon arrival via their electronic device, such as laptops and smartphones.

**Listening Sessions**

       A total of seven listening sessions were hosted virtually on Zoom or in person for approximately 90 minutes, some of which were co-hosted by campus partners. Listening session locations included Walker Hall for the Graduate Student session, the Student Community Center (SCC)'s MultiPurpose Room (MPR) for undergraduate student sessions, and the International House (off-campus) for the faculty session to maximize accessibility for the participants. All locations were public, open, and on the UC Davis property, except for the International House. The in-person sessions provided refreshments to the participants. In both in-person and virtual listening sessions, participants were divided into smaller breakout groups, each led by a facilitator moderating the discussion and a notetaker. After the breakout groups finished their discussions, all participants convened, and facilitators shared highlights from their breakout groups. For sessions with smaller attendance, all attendees discussed the questions together rather than separating into breakout groups. If participants had more thoughts to share, they were encouraged to complete a post-session survey, which gave them an opportunity to reflect and respond anonymously to the same questions asked during the live listening sessions.

**Listening Sessions and Data Collection**

       The three core research questions guided the discussions, which varied by demographic groups:***

    1. Goal #3 of the UC Davis Strategic Plan "To Boldly Go" is to "Embrace diversity, practice inclusive excellence and strive for equity. Make UC Davis a place of excellence for learning and working by supporting a culture that values the contributions and aspirations of all our students, staff and

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[75] https://www.ohsu.edu/university-center-excellence-development-disability/community-listening-sessions

faculty; promotes wellness and a culture of sustainability; and cultivates the open interchange of ideas."[76] Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational or professional pursuits?

2. What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?

3. What research or actions do you think are effective or what would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention and advancement of Black students at UC Davis?

***see Appendix D for all variations of questions for each session.*

The listening sessions were facilitated in a manner that allowed participants to segue into related topics around the Black community experience at UC Davis. The IDEA team also acknowledged and considered that anti-Blackness impacted people in different ways and may also be perceived differently by each person. Though IDEA developed a definition of anti-Blackness, the definition of the term remained fluid, as the listening sessions sought to create space for participants to consider and share how they defined anti-Blackness and to describe their experiences accordingly. The participant definitions ranged from explicit anti-Black racism to more subtle ways people felt were devalued and dismissed. With this approach, the data was shaped by the participants who attended and the experiences that they decided to share with the IDEA.

Participant responses during the listening session were collected by an IDEA graduate student researcher, UCD staff, undergraduate students, and graduate students who volunteered as notetakers and peer facilitators during each session. Prior to each listening session, the IDEA team convened with volunteers to train note-taking techniques and peer facilitation. Each session was facilitated in a peer-to-peer approach to foster a community environment where participants could freely converse. In this way, student facilitators were assigned as facilitators for student sessions, faculty were assigned as facilitators for faculty sessions, and so forth. Some facilitators, including the undergraduate and graduate student facilitators, were given a gift card or stipend as a token of appreciation for their time.

As peer facilitators moderated the conversations, notetakers took extensive notes throughout the session, which were later reviewed and coded for further analysis. To make each session as effective as possible, the IDEA team debriefed with facilitators and notetakers following each session to discuss what worked well and identify any adjustments needed. Following a debrief from the first listening session (the first staff listening session), the IDEA team reflected and established a template for notetakers to utilize to ensure consistency in how the data was collected. This template and corresponding instructions were utilized for all remaining listening sessions (see Appendix E). Given that reflection processes can be traumatic and emotionally triggering, community counselors and licensed professionals from the Student Health and Counseling Services office were available along with CADSS staff to provide additional support as needed during the undergraduate sessions.

The listening sessions included Google Jamboard, an online platform for a collaborative discussion, where participants can freely "post" their experiences without verbally sharing. Each listening session was followed by an optional online Qualtrics survey that included the research questions to provide any additional insights or expand upon information that participants shared during the session. This also ensured privacy for participants to share experiences that they may not have felt comfortable discussing with others. The IDEA team provided an additional online survey to campus partners to share with their communities so those unable to attend the listening session could share their feedback if desired. The IDEA team used all three strands of data (discussion notes, Jamboard comments, survey responses) to triangulate the findings.

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[76] https://leadership.ucdavis.edu/strategic-plan/goal-3

# Appendix D – Listening Session Questions

**(3-10-2022) Staff Listening Session - Virtual #1**
1.      In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your career?
2.      What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3.      What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black staff (faculty or students) at UC Davis?

**(4-6-2022) Student Listening Session #1**
1.      Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational pursuits?
2.      What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3.      What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black students at UC Davis?

**(4-19-2022) Staff Listening Session -Virtual #2**
1.      Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability (or the ability of your peers) to advance in your/their career?
2.      What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3.      What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black staff at UC Davis?

**(5-3-2022) Student Listening Session #2**
1.      Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability (or that of your peers) to advance in your educational pursuits?
2.      What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know to achieve excellence?
3.      What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black students at UC Davis?

**(5-16-2022) Faculty Listening Session**
1.      Existing practices and innovations that have helped you excel, as well as ways in which anti-Blackness has impeded your ability to advance in your career and education pursuits.
2.      Research or actions you think should be implemented or enhanced to support the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black faculty at UC Davis.

**(5-17-22) Graduate Student Listening Session**
1.      Contributions and aspirations of all of our students, staff, and faculty at UC Davis should be realized. In what ways has anti-Blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational pursuits?
2.      What existing practices and innovations have helped you achieve excellence?
3.      What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black graduate/professional students at UC Davis?

**(6-16-2022) Alumni Listening Session -Virtual**
What would enhance the recruitment and retention of our Black students and, more importantly, your involvement with UC Davis, an alumni member?

# Appendix E – Note-taking Tips and Template

*UCD Aggie Black Excellence Student Listening Session*

## NOTETAKER TIPS

Hello, and thank you fellow note-takers! Below is a template we'd like you to use when submitting your notes. Note-taking is a dynamic process that does not have to look like this format DURING a note-taking session. Reorganizing notes in this format AFTER a note-taking session (and putting some identifiers) would be very helpful in keeping consistency across our data and disseminating the research in the future.

If you can identify the person (or their major, transfer/non-transfer, student year) during the note-organization process, great! However, the pace of the dialogue may cause challenges in identification as well. In that case, please omit the name part. Our final report will **not include** student names.

## NOTES TEMPLATE

### Group 2 Breakout Notes

**Facilitator:** INSERT FACILITATOR NAME

**Notetaker:** INSERT NOTEAKER NAME NAME

**Number of breakout session participants:**

**Provide a description of the make-up for the group[1]:**

**Attendees (optional)[2]:**

### Questions:

*List questions in sequential order. Please include follow-up questions, if used. (Add question numbers as needed if other questions come up.)*

1. In what ways has anti-blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational pursuits?

2. What existing practices and innovations have helped you or those you know achieve excellence?

3. What research or actions do you think are effective or would you like to see to enhance the recruitment, retention and advancement of black students at UC Davis?

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[1] Provide information that describes the breakout group participants. Be as descriptive as possible without identifying individual participants. For example: Describe the range of majors that the group made up, or what year (i.e. first year, second year), if they transferred to UCD or entered as a first-year student from high school.

[2] If you do indicate names of any meeting attendees please note that we will remove that information from any final report that is composed. As we finalize the notes we will also replace the actual name with a pseudonym as to not identify individual participants.

1

<u>Notes</u>:

| Question #[3] | Notes[4] | Note Taker/Facilitator Comments[5] |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |

## POST EVENT WRITE-UP

After the event, once you review and complete the write-up of your notes you can add additional identifiers in your facilitator's comments. This may help detect response patterns across different questions (and later on, by groups). To protect anonymity, we can put "Student A" Staff A" "Faculty A"/Name. Again, any names listed will be removed from the final report.

Below is an example:

- Q1. **In what ways has anti-blackness impeded your ability to advance in your educational pursuits?**
  - Student A - thinks this, examples, ideas, etc.
  - Student B - thinks this, examples, ideas, etc.
  - Student C - thinks this, examples, ideas, etc.

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[3] Add question numbers as needed.
[4] Please provide raw notes, quotes (not attributed to specific people) and information gathered. Please do not summarize or make inferences based on statements by focus group participants.
[5] If applicable, facilitators and note takers are able to provide additional context to provide additional clarification/information to those conducting analysis of the information provided. Examples of comments may include the following:
- One or two participants dominated the discussion related to this question.
- There was consensus of all breakout group participants related to this area of focus.
- Students who transferred to UCD didn't feel that they could respond to this question due to lack of involvement in these efforts.

2