

BSM: Over four-hundred strong and still moving along

Story by Chatesha R. Veale

The Black Student Movement, better known as the BSM, celebrates its 30th anniversary. The BSM was founded on November 16, 1967. The organization was and still serves as the main political and social organization for African-American students at UNC. Throughout the years, the members and supporters of the BSM have worked to make the organization a stronger one by focusing on the positive. This organization is comprised of over four hundred members who want to represent the African-American students at UNC and promote a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. The BSM through the years has been an organization that thrives on knowledgeable students who want to make the university as well as the community better for African-American students. As the organization celebrates its 30th anniversary, ideas of scholarship, friendship, and fellowship will come into play. Reliving the history of the BSM highlights an organization that has strived for excellence and ignored defeat.

Under the leadership of President India Williams, the BSM will continue to promote the ideas that the organization was guided by 30 years ago. Williams feels that the BSM is doing just that.

"The BSM has a lot to offer," said Williams. "We serve to educate ourselves and those who are not like us."

When Williams took the role as president, she had to make a transition. Her ideology was different from presidents in the past few years. Williams wanted the BSM to take a more political stance.

Williams said, "There has to be a balance between political, educational, and social events. Everyone has to get involved."

The BSM represents something for everyone that is involved in it. Programs of the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center, such as Communiversity which includes Saturday School, Homework Assistance, and the Literacy Program have all helped the organization to stand out.

Entities within the BSM: Opeyo!, BSM Gospel Choir, Ebony Readers/Onyx Theater, Harmonyx and the Black Ink showcase the talents of the African-American here at UNC. All of these things have been made possible through the BSM. The history of the BSM is a vast one.

"We are the voice for African-American students," said Bailey. "It is up to the African-American students to let the BSM know what they want."

Carrying on the legacy of the BSM is what current members want to do. There is a need to promote a sense of belonging. African-American students are encouraged to take a part in an organization that represents them. Tamara Bailey, Vice-President of the BSM, said, "The BSM represents the African-American community at UNC. When the university has issues affecting the African-American community, the BSM is asked for help."

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Bailey also said that the BSM represents the African-American community at UNC even if they do not want it to.

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Williams and Bailey agree that there is unity within the BSM. Friendship is definitely something that both of them have gained. They feel that friendship will continue to hold the organization together despite any negativity that may arrive.

The BSM is definitely over 400 strong but to keep it moving along, is up to the African-American students at UNC. The organization doesn't discriminate to any race. Anyone can become a member if she or he knows what the BSM stands for and is willing to promote the causes of the BSM.

Williams said, "Anyone whose goals are in line with that of the BSM can become a member. That person must have an interest in cultural and social enhancement of the BSM."

The goal of Membership Committee of the BSM, chaired by **Chris Faison** and **Tremayne Manson**, was to recruit the 400th member of the organization. Congratulations go out to **Gajarah Ballard** who is the recipient of this honor.

CONGRATULATIONS!