

Get UP, Get Out and DO SOMETHING!

by Dustyn Baker

Lately, I have begun to have concerns dealing with our vast concentration of black leaders in the BSM. As students, we complain that student government does not know what we African-American students want. However, we hesitate to join or recruit others to join such organizations we complain about. Understand I know my statements do not apply to everyone. I know many students who put much time and energy in these traditionally white organizations. However, I must ask a question to all black students. Where are my sisters and brothers working within student government, CAA, the Advisory Committee to the Chancellor and/or Board of Trustees, CUAB and many more? Yes, it is very important for us all to participate and give efforts to the BSM, but I feel it is just as important that we cognitively spread our efforts throughout UNC.

I have fought within myself to figure out where exactly I should spend the majority of my extracurricular time while a student at UNC-CH. I eventually received an appointment as subgroup coordinator and later became the president of Ebony Readers Onyx Theatre (a subgroup of the BSM). I was not satisfied, though. I soon realized there was only one of twelve students sitting on the Student Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees who was not white. How can this organization call themselves a "student advisory committee" if they are not composed of real students? How is the Board of Trustees supposed to be clued in on issues of the

BSM, NAACP and CHISPA if only one of the members had ever been to one of these meetings? Realizing this problem, I knew it was time for me to get involved outside of the BSM.

While it is incredibly important to continue to agitate the University with minority concerns through the manners of the BSM, we must find alternative routes into the hierarchy we call UNC. When our concerns are finally heard, they will be given to a "committee" to facilitate discussion on an issue. Who exactly do you think appoints the committee? Obviously not us. If we had, many more of our 22 demands would have long been met. When we look at our current United States government and civil/minority rights you can easily see the importance of this issue. If we merely had the NAACP knocking on legislators' doors to lobby for or against certain issues, I as a female of color could hardly expect my requests for an unbiased nation to be answered. We have brilliant men and women agitating the government to ensure that each one of your voices are heard.

Thank goodness for Congresswomen Maxine Waters, Eva Clayton and Barbara Jordan; former Sen. Carol Mosely-Braun, and Congressmen Harold E. Ford and Melvin L. Watt. Without these former and current members of congress, issues concerning us may not have found such strong voices in the Capital. In the same way, it is imperative that all of our own "black talent" not be focused into majority black organizations. We too must follow

in the footsteps of the Brauns, Watts and Fords and stir up the campus as a whole. Go forth and run into the offices of the Campus Y, Student Government and Order of the Bell Tower. Just get involved. Understand that you, like I, have no right to complain about the way CAA handled its homecoming election unless you try to fix the problem and make sure someone is voicing your concerns every time their cabinet meets. I have no right to be disgruntled with how separate student government is if I have not made sure that a friend or I get involved and make it to those cabinet meetings on Sunday nights. I am not entitled to protest a biased Honor Court's decision unless I figure out a way to make sure people who look like me work within the system. We can no longer complain.

Many organizations are recruiting people who show more diversity. Let one of those people be you. Want to step out and get involved? The BSM liaison program is an excellent start. Sit in with other organizations while still staying an active member of the BSM. Come to Suite C and ask your president, other cabinet members or even me what you can do. Whatever you do, make sure you enjoy your life here and leave your mark. In the end, you will not only help yourself, but also aid in the triumph of so many lost voices.

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YOUR VOICE!

From the Editor:

These two articles make up a new section of the Black Ink called "Your Voice!" This section was created to feature reader submissions. If you would like to comment on what you just read or address new issues, your editorials are more than welcome. Email submissions to cscott@email.unc.edu or leave them in the Black Ink box located in the BSM office. Due to space limitations we reserve the right to choose the best submissions for publication.