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Student Voices

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Student Voices

*Maleah A. Wells, Amira Fitzpatrick, Kaitlin Hall,
Joshua Chambers, Christopher Jones, Nyah Johnson*

This begins with reflections from student research assistants who moderated the session. This session introduces the major issues which will be addressed during the symposium.

Moderator: Maleah A. Wells

I'm currently senior with a major in history and minors in Africana studies and psychology. Also, I am finishing my term as vice president of



Maleah Wells

Black Action Through Unity. This spring semester, I participated as a student research assistant for the Symposium on Race. My research focused on the experiences of Black students on campus within the last five to six years. The goal was pick up where the last symposium left off regarding the Black experience here. My research consisted of articles, websites, *Flyer News*, and other news outlets that mentioned the University of Dayton with regard to racial issues.

Being a history major, when doing research like this, nothing really surprises me. What I enjoyed the most was looking at past student activism on campus. Looking at the progress of Black student leaders and activists within the last few years was inspiring. I have served on the BATU executive board for two years and have been a member for three

years. BATU was involved in a lot on campus, and it allowed me to reflect on past accomplishments. What really helped is that at the same time I was doing research for the symposium, I was also completing my senior capstone on a similar topic, the Black studies movement. I was able to make a lot of connections with the past student activism and the present. The fight to make UD a more equitable institution for Black students has been long and doesn't look to be anywhere near over.

Some things that I observed were that Black students do a lot for the University, and most times, they have nothing to show for it. The University loves to talk with Black students, use them for pictures, and use their stories for recruitment and donations but does little to support Black students. I feel that if the University really cared, they would allocate funds to MEC, Black organizations, Black spaces, scholarships, and the Africana Studies program. The University is great at talking about anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion but does the minimum of acting on it. Another issue that I have with the University is that they don't have a relationship with Dayton Public Schools students. Why is it that UD doesn't interact with local high schoolers in the area? I'm not talking about Chaminade Julianne or Alter; I am referring to Meadowdale, Dunbar, Ponitz, etc. It makes no sense that high schoolers in the Dayton Public Schools don't have access to an institution located in their own backyard. I also hate the fact that the only scholarship available to them is the McIntosh scholarship, which is only available to one student in the entire district of five or six different high schools—but have the audacity to bring elementary school students from DPS to come for Christmas on Campus.

Moderator: Amira Fitzpatrick

When Dr. Morgan first sent me the application description to be a research assistant for the 2021 Symposium on Race, I was ecstatic that



Amira Fitzpatrick

someone had considered me for this position. I was eager to get started working and was excited to be able to contribute to something greater than myself, particularly on a subject I am so passionate about. So many of my peers whom I look up to have already been heavily involved in racial justice on our campus, and I was very excited to be blessed with the opportunity to engage with this and contribute in my own way.

When I first started working, I had no idea where my research would lead me or how it would contribute to the overall symposium. Focusing on alumni experiences, it was hard to do research because, obviously, alumni are no longer on campus. I focused my research on the archives and on social media, looking for prominent alumni during their time at UD and what sort of things they were experiencing then, in efforts to compare it to now. As a sociology and criminal justice double-major with a minor in Africana studies, as well as a Black female student who has grown up in predominantly white spaces her entire life, I am fascinated with the way stories intersect throughout race and gender as well as across the experiences of students. Although disheartening, it is very much validating to know that people are going through and went through the same things I have been through my entire life.

Planning for the symposium was equally as exciting. I enjoy planning and creating schedules, so I was really thankful to be a part of the planning and facilitation of some sessions. I hope that in the future I can do more to organize and contribute. Attending the sessions throughout the week, it was really refreshing to see many of my classmates at sessions. I also got to virtually eat lunch with the keynote speaker, Dr. Shannen Dee Williams. I was really thankful for the

opportunity to sit down with her and pick her brain regarding Catholicism and the Black Lives Matter movement.

I don't know what it looks like to continue our work into the future, but I am hopeful that I can continue contributing to this project. I have enjoyed getting to work with the students and faculty on this project and have appreciated the support and encouragement from everyone. It would be amazing to host another symposium next year so that it could be in person, but if it is not for another four years, I can't wait to see what new discoveries students (and hopefully full-time staff) are able to uncover and highlight in future symposiums.

Panelists

- Kaitlin Hall
- Joshua Chambers
- Christopher Jones
- Nyah Johnson

Discussion

Maleah Wells: My name is Maleah Wells, and I'm a third-year senior history major with minors in Africana studies and psychology. I'm also a research assistant and vice president of Black Action Through Unity.

Amira Fitzpatrick: My name is Amira Fitzpatrick. I am a junior studying sociology and criminal justice with a minor in Africana studies. I'm also a research assistant, and I'm involved with too many things on campus. You probably see me at the Rec all the time and other organizations as well. Thank you, everyone, for coming today. We're going to introduce our panelists:

- Kaitlin Hall is a second-year discover science major striving to double major in sociology and human rights. She is the vice president of community outreach for the Multicultural Programming Council, a member of the campus unity committee, and a member of Black Action Through Unity.
- Nyah Johnson is a sophomore mechanical engineering technology major from Indianapolis. She is part of RHA (Residential Housing Association), where she serves as one of the vice presidents in VWK (Virginia W. Kettering Residence Hall). She is also a

member of BATU and is one of the MEP (Minority Engineering Program) ambassadors, where she serves as an outreach coordinator.

- Joshua Chambers is a senior from Tinley Park, Illinois, pursuing a degree in international business management with a concentration in global markets. He is the director of the multicultural business leaders' program, which seeks to provide mentorship, guidance, and professional advancement to multicultural business students at the University of Dayton.
- Christopher Jones is a second-year theater major working toward switching to a pre-med major with a theater minor. He's from Philadelphia and is currently the president of the Multicultural Programming Council, a member of Black Action Through Unity, a Common Good Player, and a resident assistant in Marycrest Complex.

What made you choose UD?

Maleah Wells: Thank you so much, Amira, for the introductions. The first question is: What made you choose UD?

Nyah Johnson: My first visit to UD was for Women in Engineering overnight, and it was a bunch of white people, honestly. So that kind of turned me away from going to UD, and then my mom told me that UD had the multicultural overnight, which was with previously OMA (Office of Multicultural Affairs, now known as MEC, the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center). So when I went to that overnight it kind of changed my viewpoint on UD, and I could actually see people like me, so going to that overnight really helped play a huge part.

Kaitlin Hall: I'm from the South, so when I was coming to UD, it was actually my first visit because I was going to a university up in Michigan, and UD was just on the way. I had a pretty traumatic high school experience being from the South, and like there are not many people that look like me or even just care about me. So when I first came to UD, it just reminded me so much of my high school, and I just didn't want to come here. It wasn't until I started getting emails from MEC, and then I started going to the MEC overnight, the STEM camp, and the orientation through MEC. In that, I really started seeing how the center really

supported me. I decided to come to UD because of it, and I'm so glad I made that decision.

Joshua Chambers: UD wasn't on my radar in terms of on my collegiate list, but I actually have a mentor who was an alumni here. He reached out to me as I was going through my college decisions and everything. He asked me what I was looking for, and then he suggested UD, and I kind of went from there. From that, we ended up doing a visit—he actually brought me down to the campus. I then got to meet with Ms. Henderson. Kathleen Henderson actually played a big pivotal role in my decision coming to the University. She brought me around, gave me a tour of the campus. I didn't have much to do in Chicago, and they gave me the opportunity to kind of see what was going on.

At first, I didn't see myself in the University, and then we walked by the BATU house. I didn't know that's what it was at the time, but I met with a lot of the Black students on campus and then got to see from them more of what the University actually is like and why they chose it, so their stories actually impacted my decision.

Christopher Jones: Being all the way from Philly, I never really heard of Dayton, and my mom was an alumna. So when it was time to start applying for colleges she kind of sprung that on me. Like Nyah said, the MEC overnight is what did it for me. Coming here, spending the night and being with other students of color, I just really connected with them quickly even though I didn't know any of them. But the ability to just connect with them real quick and to have a good time and also the view of the campus as well, I felt at home right away as soon as stepping on campus, so it just felt right for me. That is why I chose UD.

What was your initial reaction on campus?

Maleah Wells: Thank you all for sharing. My next question is: What was your initial reaction when stepping foot on campus? What was that like?

Kaitlin Hall: Again, UD reminded me of my high school, so it wasn't really too big of a difference. For my mom—my mom grew up in the north side of Nashville, which is a historically Black neighborhood, so she was a little nervous for me—it was like, “Too many white people here—are you sure you'll be OK?” I was like, “Mom, I'm going to be

fine.” So that was my mom’s reaction, but for me, UD reminded me a lot about my high school.

Christopher Jones: When I first came to campus, it was to come check in for the overnight, so we had arrived a little early before check in. We were just driving around the neighborhood, and my mom was reminiscing about old times, but in my head, I was just like, “Where are all the Black students?” I think we drove past one Black student. I was like, “I know there’s more than this,” but I’m just like, “Where are they?” So that was my initial reaction

Joshua Chambers: I think I had a great night.

Nyah Johnson: When I first came, it wasn’t really a culture shock because I grew up with a lot of white people in my school. It wasn’t really as shocking to me. It was just like I only saw one (Black student) and I’m like, “Where’s everyone else?” But everyone here is so friendly, so that kind of relieves a little bit of stress that I had.

Joshua Chambers: It wasn’t necessarily like a culture shock; I came from a pretty diverse high school. It was a Catholic high school in Chicago Heights. We had mainly white students, but it was also a decent mix of Black and Hispanic students. Coming to UD it wasn’t a culture shock; it was just a difference of the proportions and the range of diversity. At first, there was a general warm feeling. I visited the University of Kansas as well, which is a much larger campus, but it was just like a New York-style environment—everyone’s on a high pace. When I came here, there was a big shift in terms of—you know, the opening the door thing. Just to know that I’m another student or another person on your campus and having that hospitable attitude is what really did it for me.

As Black students, what resources have helped you?

Maleah Wells: Thank you all for sharing my next question is: As Black students, what are some of the resources that have helped you so far here at UD?

Nyah Johnson: Getting to know my professors well enough to actually like go to them when I actually need help. Everyone who comes from MEC and the Faculty and staff members actually show that they

support multicultural students and are actually there for us when we need it.

Joshua Chambers: I definitely agree that MEC is one of the top resources for me. Quite honestly, it's a second home. And just feel like I can truly be myself. But outside of that, I would say, like Nyah said, I like that the staff support students in that space. I see Dr. Burnley here today. He's been one of the big resources for me, where gives me wisdom from his own his own life. And Amy Lopez-Matthews—I see her in here as well—her support with some difficult situations and being there in those times. I would say the staff has been one of the things I like that gives you the most comfort. Especially from a housing standpoint—so, like, having the ability to reach out to Mr. Steve Herndon and having him as a resource for me has been a major benefit.

Kaitlin Hall: For me, definitely the staff. I think that has been the most helpful resource. Definitely MEC staff because, again, I grew up in the South. I was one of the only and the oldest person of color at my high school my senior year, so when tension started happening between our administration and students of color, it felt at that time like it was my job to make sure to help both sides. That was really scary for a 19-year-old senior who didn't know anything. So just to come to UD and see the MEC staff that are of color and knowing that if something happens, I know I can go to the MEC staff and just be like, "This is what happened to me. Who do I need to talk to?" and have that support. And the UD staff—everyone is so welcoming and supportive about anything that I need.

Christopher Jones: I'm another one for the MEC staff. Coming in my freshman year, first semester, still growing and becoming, like, a better person, I know the MEC staff would always get me straight whenever I was doing something out of pocket or I'm just being weird. But also the other MEC students as well, especially like the upperclassmen like Josh, Maleah, and Amira have taught me so many things and helped me through so many problems. It's just like what Josh said earlier—a big family. I see it more as like big brothers and sisters because I'm the youngest in my family, so being away from my family's still a little weird to me. But knowing that I have the MEC staff and other students here who want to see me thrive and excel in my work makes me

feel much better to be here and know that people have my back and are here to support me.

Maleah Wells: Thank you guys so much for sharing. Yeah, it seems MEC is a huge center for a lot of us. So, the next questions are going to be a little bit deeper, just to let you know so it's not a shock or anything.

Have you had any encounters with racism or prejudice?

Maleah Wells: My next question is: While being on campus, have you had any encounters with racism or prejudice?

Joshua Chambers: Short answer, yes, it's been a couple times, but there have been more good times than bad times, I will say thankfully. In the bad times, even though you remember them, they're overshadowed by the other situations that I've been fortunate enough to have. Also, even in those bad times, I've been grateful for the fact that I don't go through them alone. That's one of the keys for me. Like in one of the experiences I had, having Black Action Through Unity (BATU) really step up on my behalf and be that support base for me, as well as other Black students just letting me know like, "Hey, what happened wasn't OK, and I don't want you to feel like you just need to, you know, sit with it on your own shoulders." Also the staff, going to bat for me at times I needed it, sitting there through processes of, you know, reporting, documentation, hearings, and things of that nature. Having that base and knowing that you're not dealing with this on your own has been a big resource for those times.

Christopher Jones: So far in my time here at UD, I haven't really experienced much racism, but in terms of that, I also feel like being known on campus or, at least on my floor last year, was an issue for me. I was the only student of color on my floor. At some point, everyone on my floor just stopped talking to me. I would walk past and not even get a simple hello. I kind of just pushed myself away from my floor. There were times where I just would stay out all night until I was ready to go to sleep, and I went back to my room. My RA really didn't help either because he didn't really care about anything, and I guess he didn't see there was an issue going on. But yeah, I just kind of felt isolated somewhat and alone on my floor, and it was kind of hard to talk about because I didn't know if anyone else had the same experience.

Nyah Johnson: I kind of have the same answer as Chris. I have not experienced it, but I know people who have experienced it, and I know whenever they brought it up, the issue was handled quickly, which is something that I really admire about the UD staff—like they’re able to acknowledge when they’ve done wrong and then be able to fix it and make sure nothing like that ever happens again.

Kaitlin Hall: In my freshman year, I remember sitting in my room, and my neighbors were partying. Like, I’m the only Black person on my floor, so you can imagine my shock when I heard one of the white boys yelling the N-word. That was just a shock to me. So, I ran over there and knocked on the door, and I didn’t even know what to say. I just yelled like, “If I hear anyone say that word again, I am going to report you guys.” I ended up telling one of the upperclassmen, and she ended up reporting it, filling out an incident report, but it made that living space so uncomfortable to live in. After that incident, I had to move residence dorms, and then that same thing happened to my freshman mentee.

So, I had to kind of like had to relive it through her and help her and support her in a way that I didn’t have when I went through it. I didn’t really have someone else who went through that experience to support me, so it was a little traumatic. But I hope that throughout my time here at Dayton, we tried to help educate people to the use of language, and that these walls are really thin. I don’t think a lot of people realize that, but it is one experience that I had.

Maleah Wells: Thank you all for sharing. I’m glad that you were able to get the support and the help that you needed in order to cope with your situations because I know exactly how that feels, and I can definitely relate to all of you.

Social media: Any experiences about race and social justice?

Maleah Wells: The next question is: Within the last few years, a lot of incidents on UD’s social media have pertained to students of color and alumni. Have you had any personal experiences with alumni on social media when it comes to race and social justice?

Kaitlin Hall: I haven’t, but my mom has. My mom is very active in the parent Facebook page, so during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, she posted on the Facebook page about Black Lives Matter,

and the moderator deleted her posts because they didn't want to be political or have tension between all the parents, so it was kind of disheartening because you would think a bunch of adults could handle reading a Black Lives Matter post, but it was causing some tension in the Facebook group.

Nyah Johnson: I personally was not a part of that, but I did see it on a particular UD post that was made toward the beginning or middle of last semester. A lot of people were disagreeing with a lot of viewpoints on the students on campus, and I think UD—whoever runs the UD page—handled this situation well.

Joshua Chambers: I also haven't had any personal experiences with it. Until this past year, I've kept my personal pages private, but then recently I just let my page be public. I didn't want to engage part of that until having to really stand up for one of my other friends, hearing their side of it, and knowing that if they would have had other students stepping in on their behalf, it would have felt easier. That's why I kind of took that approach.

Christopher Jones: Like the others, I really didn't have any much experience unless I was agreeing with what someone else has said. But I would read the comments at least, I've seen what alumni said. It was just kind of crazy because you wouldn't think alumni would be saying like things like that, especially under the school they went to, and it's just crazy how quickly they are to come back at current students.

What is your perspective when it comes to alumni?

Maleah Wells: To that question, a lot of the comments made by alumni are very disheartening and honestly on the racist side as well. I've seen comments where they've talked about us being the other or, "Our voices don't matter"—that we're terrorists and stuff like that. When you see those comments, how does that make you feel? What is your perspective when it comes to alumni?

Christopher Jones: To see comments like those is just really sad to see because no matter our skin color, we're still students here at the University of Dayton, how you were a student at University of Dayton, so for you to attack the current students—especially the students of color, because of course there's not a lot of us—it's just really sad just to see

that. Then also the University—they don't always take it down or just don't get to it in enough time. Sometimes there's been times where I'm like, "Just turn the comment section off," or something like that. Usually one or a few racist comments do get in, and it's just like, "Are you going to leave it there or are you going to delete it?" Where are we holding people at the University of Dayton accountable, and how are we holding the alumni accountable?

Joshua Chambers: I definitely agree with what Chris said. It's difficult to see those comments from alumni, and honestly, it's kind of weird because if you came to UD, I know for a fact you went through some of the same lessons and teachings that we're going through. So you have the understanding, but it's that you care so much about your point that you're willing to discredit and neglect the students that are still here. But the side that I wish they would understand is the trauma that they're inflicting on these students. All they're trying to do is just go to class, get their degree, and one day be in the corporate world that you're currently living in and, you know, thriving in. But that is really the side of ignorance, to think that your comments don't have an impact on someone.

Kaitlin Hall: I think Chris and Josh really explained everything I would I would have said.

What support could improve Black student experiences during the pandemic?

Maleah Wells: COVID 19 has disproportionately affected communities of color. How have your experiences in the last year been impacted by COVID and your experiences being a Black student? So, what type of practices or support could improve Black student experiences during the pandemic?

Kaitlin Hall: Last year I got really sick, and not only because of COVID, but also I have a hard time with my immune system. So when we switched over to Zoom, I got really scared about how I was falling behind in my classes and how it would impact my transcript. I got scared because if I get lower grades or my GPA was not looking as great, I thought people were going to interpret my transcript as being lazy or that I didn't care anymore. I thought my transcript and my grades were going

to tell a whole different story about me. So that stress of trying to make sure I get all my classes in and make sure that I get the best grades possible just really added to my stress level. The stress actually made me a lot sicker to the point where I had to drop out of two classes last year. UD does a really good job, I think, with academic support—but that mental health portion needs to go hand in hand. I wish they would see it more hand in hand, but right now the University has it separate. Hopefully we can bring those together. I think it would be really helpful for people.

Nyah Johnson: I agree with Kaitlyn on the mental health because it seems like since we're online now, the professors think that we have a lot more time to do work, which isn't necessarily the case because we're still seeing the same amount of classes that we normally would. We should not have more work just because we're doing everything online, and then COVID also kind of ruined the College experience. Not ruined—but not being able to see my peers and work with them face to face is something that COVID has messed up. I think UD is doing a really good job of helping us make sure that we're not letting COVID ruin our experience. They have those campus late night events—those CAB events, which, if you really want to get out of your dorm, then it's just something for us to go to. Then being able to go to the MEC lounge and see people just to make sure everyone's doing OK is something that is helping some students to get through these difficult times.

Joshua Chambers: I definitely agree with what Nyah said, but I think that when we reopened the MEC space even at limited capacity, it helped a lot of Black students and multicultural students in general. It's been difficult to not see your friends, and not just from a social standpoint, but there's a level where, when you don't get to engage with other people, it's going to do something to you on a mental level, and it's the side that we don't get to address most times. It's hit home for me too, because I've had some family members who've have battled with COVID. Unfortunately, one of my family members actually didn't make it through it. We need to be safe, first—I am fully aware of that—but it's also that your mental health is just as important as your physical health. And I know I don't want to be controversial with that, but I'm trying to figure out what the solution is. I'm just hoping that one day there is some return to normalcy because it does take a toll, not having the real time to

for office hours with your professors. Some do have office hours, but when you have 30 students who now all can log in at whatever time they want to, and you're not having that one-on-one capability, it does change the dynamic. There are some questions you're not going to want to ask in front of a group. Then emailing gets very difficult because things get lost in text, as we all know.

Christopher Jones: I feel like everyone has said amazing things. I definitely agree. When we got sent home, one of my math professors was already difficult to work with in person. When we went virtual, it kind of just made him 1,000 times worse. It was, like, the second week of being online and he was already sending email about how we need to stop using Internet that doesn't work. We're having all these different issues, and he acted like we lived in all the same house or the same area. So, luckily, there are professors who did understand, but now I feel like professors definitely have a better grasp on the virtual and blended classes. I agree with what Josh said about MEC opening back up. Before COVID, I used to talk to everyone and have conversations, just walk in and out whenever I needed to. Being able to see the faces in person again is highly appreciated and is a blessing within itself. Besides the vaccines, there is really no definite answer on how we can make it better.

How has the residential experience been during COVID-19?

Maleah Wells: As a follow up question, some of you are probably living on campus at the moment or work for residence life as an RA. How has that experience been for you, being a student of color working for residence life or living in the residence halls during COVID-19? As we could see at the beginning of last semester, a lot of our white peers were out partying, going to very compact restaurants and stuff like that. How has that been for you all?

Christopher Jones: So, they're still doing that, and working as an RA is kind of difficult because we can only do so much because it's not like we can throw them in their rooms, lock them in and throw away the key. So, it's kind of just like we can just enforce the policy, and if they listen, they listen, and if they don't, they don't. They'll probably just get written up. Again, we just do the best we can, but then it definitely gets hard when students who most likely are under the influence of alcohol or

some type of drug decide to get hostile. Especially with male students; they get rough and loud. It's a scary situation because again, they don't even have a mask on. So now with COVID happening, you're being yelled at in your face by someone who doesn't have a mask on. You're just concerned whether they might hit you or something. We're just doing our job, just doing what is asked of us, and we're trying to keep you safe. Although you may not like that you are getting written up, again, it's our job. So it's definitely been hard on RAs. I feel like it's also been hard on students who aren't RAs because of the whole "You can't have guests" and "You can't go in other people's rooms." So I do sympathize for these other students, especially the first-years because that first year is about connecting with other students on campus.

Kaitlin Hall: Just to piggyback off of Chris because I'm also an RA, I visualize that my residents hate me because I am very much like, "If I see or hear a guest, we're going to have a conversation," and I stuck to my work because I definitely did have conversations with some of my residents about having guests. In talking about the seriousness of it, especially when we had almost 800 people on campus with COVID, it was a real serious time to just be like, "I'm not playing because I'm not having a COVID floor." Especially as someone who has an autoimmune disease. If I get it I'm basically going to be sick for months, like it's going to take me like a year to the recover. I don't have that privilege to stay at home to do my schoolwork; I have to be here on campus. So, you have to recognize that not everyone can go home or has a home where they can safely sit, or has a quiet area to do their work. So I also try to make sure my residents know that it is a privilege to be on campus. In the beginning of the year, especially when we have 800 COVID cases, there was a lot of tension between RAs and public safety because it felt like RAs were doing more than public safety. It even got to the point where Ras—especially the ones in the neighborhoods—saw public safety with no mask on, and there was on case where we had one neighborhood fellow ask a public safety officer to put his mask on, and he said, "I can't wear a mask because then I can't shoot people." We were all like, "Who are you? Who on campus are you shooting? Like, who are you trying to shoot on campus?" Even Eric Spina had to be brought into that conversation in that space. It was just so stressful because it feels like we

have to keep everyone safe, but also we have to be the main source of comfort for everyone else during this time.

Joshua Chambers: Being in the housing department is almost like being on the front lines for the University. As a desk assistant, my experiences are slightly different than a resident assistant's, but it's been difficult in terms of having to try and control those who choose to move around you know, without their masks. I see students coming off the elevator, and there are times when you can tell by their demeanor if they are not going to be receptive to being asked whether they will or will not put on a mask. Sometimes there's an emboldened attitude, where they may have a mentality where they feel that they don't have to or that they shouldn't be asked to. So, like trying to really get it through, like, "Listen I get that you have your own perspective on this situation, but for my safety, would you just do the courtesy of just putting your mask on? Like, that's all we're asking." We don't get enough understanding from the students. You signed the contract. You signed the Path Forward statement. You knew what was going on when you came back to campus. You signed it, and if you signed it without reading your contract, that's on you.

Nyah Johnson: I agree with what everyone else has said. They are still partying, so it'll get to the point where I'm about to go to bed, and it's still going. I have to leave my room because I live in VWK, and I can hear the people across the hall from my room. I don't want to get out of bed and go tell them that they need to quiet down because I don't want to be seen as that angry Black woman, but I'm also trying to go to sleep. They know that we have quiet hours and that they should follow the quiet hours because, like Josh said, they signed the contract before moving in. Then also VWK has an issue with people tearing down exit signs and ceiling tiles, and everyone in the building has to pay for it. I want to say it's not the minorities, because they can pick us out, and they're going to remember us because there's not too many of us. So just having to suffer as a student of color and being watched all the time is something that I also feel is happening in my residence hall. A lot of students have already had COVID before, so they're using that as an excuse, like, "Oh, I can do this because I've already had it before." I'm like, "What about the people around you?" Like everyone has said, we

can't afford to go home because we can't take that back to our parents and our family members.

What are your thoughts on an anti-racism event in 2020?

Maleah Wells: Thank you all so much for sharing. We have a few more questions left. Last year in 2020, students hosted an anti-racism demonstration. What were your initial thoughts on that event, and how was that experience for you as a Black student being in that space if you were there?

Joshua Chambers: For me, I was just really proud of the work that was put in. Jada Brown was one of the spearheads of getting that set up. I want to applaud her first for the work that she did on that. It took a lot, as a student who's still in classes to coordinate an entire event not just for the Black students, but for the entire campus and then seeing the support that we had from our white counterparts. That did a lot for me to know that I'm not fighting this fight alone. That was one thing that I really appreciated. Then getting the support from the Dayton community as well and having some alumni come back from the surrounding area to show their support—I really appreciated it.

Christopher Jones: I agree with what Josh said. I was asked to speak at the event, so when I got up there to speak, I'm just seeing not only like the multicultural students, but also seeing the white students on campus. It was like, "OK, now we're definitely not alone in this," and that there's people that actually do care about this and see this as an issue and are here to help with that issue. I definitely got a lot out of it. Everyone who spoke I found very knowledgeable as well because some things I wasn't aware of myself. It was just amazing how everyone came together for this event.

Kaitlin Hall: I helped Jada Brown plan the event, and it was just an amazing experience to be in that group that was planning and coming up with ideas and just being able to support and uplift each other and be able to uplift voices. The student march on campus was incredible because I remember in high school, we tried to do a March for Our Lives movement—just a quick everyone walks out of school for 15 minutes because of recent school shootings. My friend who was trying to organize it almost got threatened to be expelled from school for just

doing something as simple as walking out for 15 minutes and going back to class. So just to see this huge difference of how the University quickly approved everything and got everything together, it was just incredible, and I hope that we can continue to do more events like that and spread more awareness.

Nyah Johnson: I was not able to attend because I had an exam that day; if I didn't I would have gone. Just seeing the campus come together on social media was something really amazing. I didn't really know how many how many people would actually come to the event, and just seeing the turnout was such an amazing thing that I wish I could have been a part of—just seeing the students come together to understand that Black lives do matter just as much as everyone else's and the white students like actually coming to march with everyone else in that. The event was something that was really empowering to see especially here at a PWI (predominantly white institution).

What do you want the UD community to know about being a Black student on campus?

Maleah Wells: The next question is: What do you want the UD community to know about being a Black student on campus?

Nyah Johnson: Just for them to know that we are human just like them, and our voices matter. I've been hearing that a lot of white students are intimidated, and that's why they don't really feel comfortable with walking up and talking to us because they just don't know what to expect from us. We're human, and we're not going to go off unless we have to, so just being able to be comfortable around us, because there's more Black people outside of UD. So, you're going to run into a Black person, so be able to be comfortable now to be prepared for what the outside world has to offer.

Kaitlin Hall: I agree with Nyah. Just come talk to us, I feel like a lot of students are intimidated or try too hard to relate to us. I mean, we're just as human, if you just talk to me about like the latest WandaVision episode, I'm going to respond. You don't have to talk about, like, Beyonce. You don't have to talk about basketball or rap music—especially that rap music, because I don't even listen to rap music. Come up to me talking about K-pop—I will know everything about K-pop.

Like I'm just as human as you are. Students will also try to talk to us in slang or AAVE—don't do that. Well, you can, but I would just recommend not to do that. Just be yourself. I'm also like, when we go to MEC, it's not just Black students. At MEC there's Middle Eastern students; there's Asian students; there's Latinx students. If you're always wondering where we're hiding, that's really where we're hiding. We're all there. Just stop by. I know I get a lot of white students, they don't like to be in that or that are intimidated because they're like, "Oh there's so many Black people," and I'm like, "That's how I feel when I go to class. I'm like, 'Oh my God, there's too many white people in my lab, and I'm the only Black person, and it's so intimidating.'" So I feel like it's a fair trade-off. So if you feel intimidated, just know that I feel the same way coming to class, and it just makes it so much easier if you guys just say hi and be nice to us, or you just talk to us because at the end of the day, we're all human, and we're all just trying to get through, get our degree and get out of here.

Christopher Jones: Yeah, I was going to say what Kaitlyn just said—we're all here to get our degree, just like the next person. Just treat us like we're human. That's kind of another thing on our backs now—that we are being treated differently, and getting this degree is already hard enough. One less thing on our plate would be lovely, just by having simple conversation and not basing everyone off the stereotypes that they could have grown up with. Just respect us like you will respect your own friends. We're just people here, trying to get our degree so we can move on with our lives for the future.

Joshua Chambers: Yeah, I would echo everything that's already been already been said. The only thing I would add, though, is that we're not the expert on everything Black culture. So when you ask us, "Hey, Josh, you know what would be the Black perspective on this?" I can tell you what Josh thinks, you know? But I can't tell you what Chris thinks, what Nyah thinks, what Kaitlyn thinks. We're all different people. Understand that my opinion is my opinion. I don't speak for everyone that comes from Chicago either.

What needs to change on campus?

Maleah Wells: The next question is: What type of things do you think need to change on campus? This can pertain to administration, the way they do curriculum, student organizations, anything.

Kaitlin Hall: Whoever's on administration on this call, I would just say: Give MEC more money, more money, more money. They can give MEC more money. That's all I have to say. That's the best thing you can do for this campus is just giving MEC more money.

Nyah Johnson: Acknowledging that there's an issue on campus or in a classroom could eventually lead to change. I feel like once it's brought up, it at least has been heard. I don't know if it would be considered, but if it's been brought up at least once, then just the fact that if you bring it up multiple times, it's still going to be in the back of the brain: I've heard this before, and I'll write it down; maybe next time, and then we'll get around to it when we can because there's a lot going on, especially right now on the campus. Just acknowledging the fact that there is an issue could eventually lead to change.

Christopher Jones: And to piggyback off what Nyah just said: Whenever anything happens, students of color should not have to be calling out their own university to do something. The University needs to take it upon themselves to be like, "OK, so clearly something is happening, and we need to do something." Sometimes it just feels like things aren't done unless students are calling UD out on Instagram or tagging them on a post so that they know that there's an issue. So, take it upon yourself. I get the restriction to things in that everyone is busy. Just to acknowledge it with like a post—we see where you are, we see what's going on, we'll be posting something soon. Yes, things happen and things require time, but again, just trying to get something out as soon as possible and not needing to be called out from your own students is a major thing.

Joshua Chambers: First, I emphasize what Kaitlyn said, you know—send MEC more money definitely because the work that they're doing is a tremendous amount, honestly. I've had the privilege of being able to see all that they do, and it's not just MEC. Like the Counseling Center: I think they have four or five counselors—correct me if I'm wrong—for the entire campus, so that's less than a counselor per thousand students,

and I feel like that's a lot for them. Maybe the same alumni that went to comment and have so much to say about everything that we do—ask them to send some money that way. So that's my suggestion on that. In terms of what we could do to make it better, I would just say creating more space for the spaces that are doing the work.

How do you see the next five years for students of color on campus?

Maleah Wells: Our final question: How do you see the next five years for students of color on campus?

Kaitlin Hall: I notice that every year, the underclassmen are getting more and more diverse. So speaking from experience, as a school that wants to have more diversity, they need to invest to keep that diversity. It's one thing to say you want diversity; it's another thing to support and let it grow because for student a color, we are having different experiences, and we all have different needs. If the school can't accommodate for all our needs, campus is going to become less and less diverse. I hope that when I do come back, I will see more people that look like me and more faculty that look like me, and I think UD is on the right track on supporting students.

Nyah Johnson: Yeah I definitely agree with everything Kaitlyn said. So hopefully COVID is gone in five years so that they can actually go out into these communities that have a lot of diversity and get them to come to UD. I'm only a sophomore, and it seems like the class under me has a lot more diversity than the class I'm in. I think it's just going to expand more and more every year, which is a good thing.

Christopher Jones: I agree with what both of them said, and yeah, I definitely want to see more diversity within these next five years, but also more connection between the multicultural students. We need help with growing that connection between multicultural students and white students, knowing that they're here because they're friends and not here for a PATH point or something for a class. So definitely seeing connections will be much better—seeing more faculty of color.

Maleah Wells: Just to be a little bit more specific, where do you think diversity needs to be more implemented, whether is it curriculum, administration, faculty, staff. Where do you see that it needs more work?

Nyah Johnson: faculty and staff for sure is one of them, and also in the curriculum. I feel like we've been learning the same thing, like elementary school, so maybe diversity within the curriculum, like in the CAP classes because we're required to take them.

Joshua Chambers: I would definitely say the curriculum, even with what is required in our CAP classes. It wasn't until last spring when I went to Dr. Amin's course, History 337, History of Africa, 19th Century to the Present, that I learned more of my own culture. And of course, Dr. Lawrence-Sanders's course. These courses should be implemented into the CAP structure whereby it isn't just an elective, where Black culture might actually be a requirement—just as much as a requirement to learn about European culture.