

The BFSA Voice: *United in Purpose*

The Newsletter of the Black Faculty and Staff Association

**Welcome
Back!**

Welcome to the Fall 2025 Semester!

Welcome Back! First and foremost, I would like to thank my entire BFSA family for the support and strength that you have given me during a very challenging time. As many of you know, my mother passed away this past July in Charlotte, NC and my sister and I just had her Celebration of Life and Internment last month in San Diego, CA; some of you were even at the celebration; my sister and I **thank you**. More importantly, I want to thank our collective for all of the positive energy, love, prayers, words of comfort, donations, meals, and so much more that you showered my family and I with. I actually opened up to a dear friend and fellow BFSA member and said, "I am really surprised at the outpouring of love and support that I am receiving from the CSUSM community" and this friend said, "you shouldn't be. We are caring for you, the same way that you have cared for us." That truly brought tears to my eyes, so I want to say thank you for allowing me to care for each of you and thank you for reciprocating that care in my time of need.

I am well aware that I am just beginning the grieving process; some moments I feel ok and in the same moment, I am filled with tears. One of the things that my mother's passing has shown me is that so much of my time was spent on her (and I would not have had it any other way), but what became clear was that it left little time to care for myself. I am hopeful that I will be able to "show up" as did last year, but the reality is that grief makes every single moment very challenging.

You may notice that we will be having far fewer events; I would like the events that we do have to be as thoughtful and intentional as possible. I encourage you to make the time to attend our monthly meetings to connect with one another and step away from your desks. For any events beyond our monthly meetings, "join whenever an event feels right for you; we will be glad to have you whenever you can."

As we continue to push through Fall 2025, I know we do so carrying not only the energy of a new academic year but also the weight of everything happening in our world right now. These times remind us of the importance of community, solidarity, and spaces where we can support and uplift one another.

The Black Faculty and Staff Association exists for all of us. It is our collective space to connect, to share, to advocate, and to celebrate. We are stronger and more impactful when we come together, and that strength depends on the participation and presence of each of us. As the African proverb reminds us, "**If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.**" Let us choose to go far; together.

I invite you to remain engaged, bring your voice to the table, and walk with us as we continue building community and creating meaningful impact at CSUSM. Together, we can ensure that this year is not only successful, but also deeply affirming for us and for the students we serve.

Wishing you an incredibly exciting semester and I hope to see you and connect at our monthly meeting later this week. I look forward to continuing to partner with each of you in the very important work that we share.

-Kevane

Our Executive Board

"I instantly felt welcome into BFSA as a friend and loved how much the BFSA impacted the CSUSM campus and students. Being part of the BFSA Executive Board will offer the opportunity to support our students so that they can truly thrive as well as help me make meaningful connections across campus."

Both Nyla and Christina were asked the following question: "What inspired you to run for a position on the BFSA Executive Board?"

BFSA EXECUTIVE BOARD '25 - '26

*Kevane L. Coleman
President

*Kenya Avilez
Vice President

*Nyla Vivas
Treasurer

*Christina Ochoa
Secretary

Shellye Sledge
Special Advisor

Justin Lewis
Emeritus

Talisha St. John
Emeritus

*Primary Board Member

"For starters, Kevane invited me to join a BFSA meeting where I got to meet new faces on campus. I joined several BFSA/BSC events, including the 2025 Sankofa Black Graduate Ceremony. While I was there, I got to see a community, celebrating and uplifting one another and I didn't feel out of place; it felt like family coming together and I love that. I am excited to be a part of the BFSA to collaborate and make new connection on campus and to support our students in an impactful and visible way."

Photo Editor: Kokoa Lawson



Pictured L to R: The 2025-2026 BFSA Executive Board (Kevane Coleman, Kenya Avilez, Christina Ochoa, Nyla Vivas)

BFSA Meeting Dates

AY 2025-2026

- 3rd Wed./month
- 12:00 - 1:00 PM
- KEL 3010 (In-Person)

**Hybrid meeting offered, if you are not able to attend in-person.*

September 17

February 18

October 15

March 18

November 19

April 15

December 17

May 20

January 21

June 17

Annual Dues Overview

\$25: BFSA Membership
\$10 - Friend of BFSA

*Dues cover membership
from July 1, 2025 -
June 30, 2026*



Your membership allows us to:

- Provide thoughtfully-hosted gatherings that foster meaningful fellowship and strengthen our sense of community
- Support our students through mentorship and sponsorship that affirms and uplifts them
- Sustain the presence and impact of BFSA across campus, ensuring that our voices and contributions remain visible and valued

By renewing your dues, you are helping to preserve and expand the legacy of support that BFSA represents for both colleagues and students.

Annual Dues Reminder



EVENTS SCHEDULE

"We know that you can't make it to everything, so please join us for the moments that work best for you."

B

September Thru 9/26 - Efori, ARTS Bldg. Gallery
An Olfactory art exhibition curated by Black Alum. Anissa Ocansey. Stop and view as your schedule allows
17 - **Member Meeting**, KEL 3010

F

October TBA - BFSA meets BSC Students & Photo, BSC (USU -3300)
• Opportunity for us to connect with BSC students
10/3 - 26, Blues for an Alabama Sky, Moxie
• Play set during the Harlem Renaissance
15 - **Member Meeting**, KEL 3010

S

November TBA - BFSA Gives Back
• Giving back to our local community
19 - **Member Meeting**, KEL 3010
• Celebrating a Year of Gratitude & Thanks

A

December 3 - CSUSM Giving Day, Virtual
• 24 hour virtual fundraiser
17 - **Member Meeting**, KEL 3010

- **BFSA WEBSITE**
- **INSTAGRAM:** [@bfsa.csusm](#)
- **FACEBOOK:** [CSUSM's Black Faculty & Staff Association - BFSA](#)
- **TEAMS**

CONNECT WITH US



Our Mission

The mission of the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) is to:

- foster equity and belonging within the university community
- strengthen, support, and promote community with students
- advocate for diversity and inclusion within academia

While BFSA highlights and addresses the unique experiences of Black faculty and staff, we welcome all CSUSM faculty and staff regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or any other protected status.

Kevane says, “we want to affirm that we welcome all. Our name reflects our history and mission, but it does not limit our community. Regardless of how individuals identify, BFSA is an inclusive space where everyone is invited and valued.”



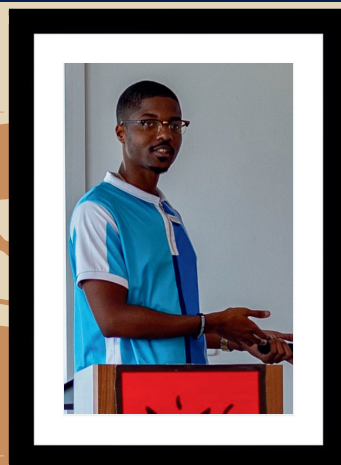
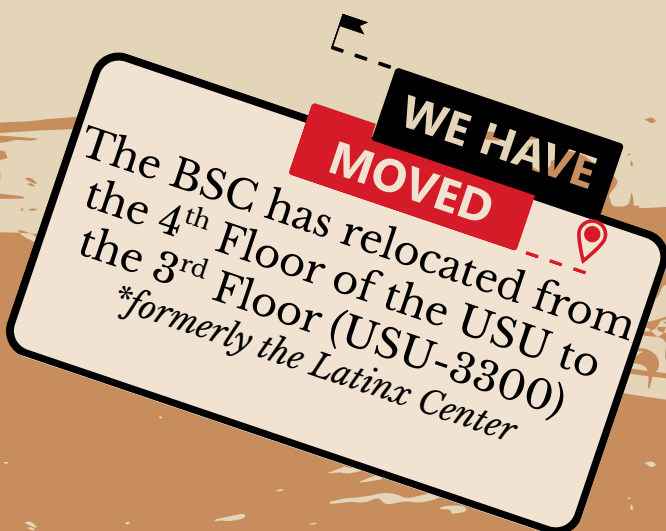
We celebrate and thank our faculty and staff who have retired this year. Their hard work and dedication have made a tremendous impact on our students and in our community. We wish them joy and fulfillment in whatever their next chapter will be!

- Dr. Sharon Elise, Sociology
- Crystal Henderson, BFSA Treasurer

Thank You

On behalf of the Black Faculty and Staff Association, we extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed donations in honor of Dr. Sharon Elise's retirement and in memory of Jeanne D. Coleman. Your generosity reflects the spirit of community that we have built so intentionally.

These gifts not only honor the legacies of two extraordinary educators in San Diego but also strengthen our ability to continue supporting our BFSA members and students as we uplift our community. We are extremely grateful for your contributions.



WELCOME

The BSC has a new Assistant Director, Marquel Reid. Stop by the BSC and show him some love.