

*Black lives truly matter,
in every sense of these words.*

***Listening to
African American Students***

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**Listening to
African American Students...**

“There aren’t many students like me here. Some people are surprised to see me here. I haven’t experienced any prejudices yet. There is no diversity when it comes to the professors.”

—18 year-old Black Female who is new to college

“Sacramento State is such a diverse campus so I think it is easy for any person to feel comfortable and welcomed here on campus. There are so many clubs & events that every student is bound to enjoy something.”

—a 21 year old, female, African American

“it’s a culture shock.... I usually am the only black male in my class. Not enough Black students go here”

—20 year old Black male

“It’s great. Being a young African American student is something that I take pride in because it isn’t as relevant as it should be.”

—an eighteen year old African American

“I feel I wasn’t well prepared before coming to college.

In class the work is so much harder & different you have to be focused and ready everyday.

It’s hard because teachers don’t coddle you & hold your hand you gotta grow up.”

—17 year old male whose african american

“It is just kinda lonely I guess for Black students just b/c the Black student population doesn’t feel unified. (But) I like the quiet, the scenery and just the sense of space to be you.”

—New to college, Black, 18, female

“It could make things challenging for yourself but if you make it, not a preventor, then you can conquer everything.”

—18 years old, female, African American, new to college, freshman, low income

“It is a challenge being at a new environment. A college I have never been before. I have grew a sense of comfortable over time, and the events displayed on campus.

The amount of events at Sac State from sports, music, movies, and exercises. It is great to have a university that promotes students to get out and participate.

I like the setting and the people seem genuine in Sac State but only time will tell as my future at Sac State will go on.”

—21 years old, Black, not from Sacramento, Jr.

“I love being black on the CSUS campus. The activities put on by black students are great. I came from a predominantly white private school so to come here and see how unified they are its fun.

All the activities on campus, especially ones for your race...make sure that you get involved with that because it helps you learn who you are.”

—18 year old African American Female

“It is definitely a experience because I do not see a lot of african americans here so at times it is tough.

I like how there is teachers and faculty that really cares and will help you in any way.”

—I am a 20 year old african american male that is finishing my first year at csus.

“It has its challenges...while its been fun and educational, it has also had its overwhelming times. The pressure of being the first one at a four years and maintaining my work habits have been an obstacle for me.

I’ve had a fun time critically thinking about the new things that I’ve learned as well as meeting more people from different backgrounds.

The only things that I did not like are the personal things that I can work on and do better as a student here.”

—I am a first generation African American female who is 19 years old.

“It is fun being a student.”

—African-American

“Not challenging, easy to get along w/ students of all ages and ethnicities. Dealing with just being a student.

(I like) everything, my teachers & classes have been very easy for me. Everyone has been helpful.”

—Black, Male, 23 Years of Age

“There aren’t many people of my ethnicity on campus like there are Asians, and whites, etc. Sometimes I feel very alienated. (But) I like the campus environment. The people I meet are nice/friendly.”

—African American/20 y.o.

“It’s very limiting. Often times in classes I am looked to as the spokes person for a particular demographic with little support from teachers.

Just constantly feeling alone, or like a radical.

(I don’t like) The lack of knowledge about diversity. Cultural sensitivity often means cultural avoidance. In an academic institution is the best place to facilitate meaningful conversations about race, gender, sexual orientation. The opportunity is often lost.”

—black female, dyslexic, returning to college

“Being a young African American woman it is very complex to be here at CSUS. Although the campus is diverse, it still lacks teachers...that look like myself and come from the same background. Sometimes it is easier for me to talk to the black faculty members because I feel more comfortable with them.

Getting involved with the Black organizations on campus. It allowed me to be more comfortable being around kids like me.

I enjoyed my classes and instructors so far. The environment is quite inviting and the faculty members seem like they genuinely want to help us succeed.”

—19, African American female

“Umm...feels a little regular. I don’t feel like there’s any difference. We are definitely a minority at this school though.”

—African American/21

“I’m a minority at a campus not for me. There aren’t many ways for African Americans to feel a sense of the college experience at this university

I like the learning communities I was a part of entering the university. I don’t feel the university offers African American students the opportunity to connect with the campus like majorities.”

—an African American 19 year old male.

“It can be difficult at times because I’m in a different situation than most students being young, black, & married. Not all teachers can relate to cultural situations because they have no recollection of certain events.

(I don’t like) The non diversity of staff.”

—Young, Black, Mom, Married

“The Black Alumni Chapter is great – very supportive.”

—African American

“I like that I have been given the opportunity to be who I want to be while I am here. There is nothing that totally restricts what you want to do and there are many opportunities for you to join various programs and clubs”

—I am a student who is new to college, who is also African American. I am a Christian and come from a religious background.

“Unvaluable, unappreciated.... Other races are being put on a pedestal”

—Black

“At times it could be challenging because you don’t know if someone is judging you on your race or not, but for the most part it is not bad.

Having so many resources to use at any time is very helpful and has helped me succeed at the university.”

—African American, 18 years young.

“It is hard to be a African American young woman attending sac state because the minority around me makes it difficult to learn my history.

A experience I would like to share is being apart of the EOP program and Pan African learning community.

I like that this campus offers a community involvement that helps people get a better one on one help with professors and instructors. I don’t like that sac state doesn’t have many African American professors or advisors.”

—African American young woman

“being a student with this perspective isn’t particularly hard and I’m able to enjoy being in Sac State. The classes are nice and the extracurricular activities has worked for me.”

—an 18 year old African-American male

“People assume I’m a thug because of where I’m from. Not a challenge for me because I love it. It’s funny and people know not to mess with me”

—black man from Oakland

“As an African-American student I only wish there were more students of my ethnicity on campus.”

—Male, African-American, 27, Transfer

“it’s a very diverse campus which makes me feel comfortable. For the most part, people are excepting and kind, although that’s how everyone acts when you first meet them. As for the instructors and professors, they have all been more than willing to help, including spending additional time with me when needed.”

—an african-american woman.

“As an African American student, its very challenging to accept the fact that at any moment in time you may be the only ‘African American’ in your class.

I do like the fact that there is a lot of support systems to help students.”

—African American

“I like that this campus offers a community involvement that helps people get a better one on one help with professors and instructors. I don’t like that sac state doesn’t have many African American professors or advisors.”

—African American young woman

“I do not feel singled out because of my ethnicity. I feel comfortable walking around campus without having to worry about someone treating without disrespect. There is no one here (or it seems to be) that is racist in any way. Everyone is nice and comforting.

I like the resources CSUS gives to help us through college. If we ever have a problem, someone is always able to help”

—Black – 18 years old

“The relationship with the teachers is great and they’re very helpful and can answer questions or at least send you to the person who would know the information you are looking for.

(I like) Getting classes and talking to counselors and the organization of classes with everything from the syllabus to note-taking.”

—African American, 28, Father, SCUSD Employee

“I feel ostracized, for lack of a better word, in some classes.”

—Black Young(er)

“Being an African American student at Sacramento State is pretty cool. There are a lot of on campus clubs for black students to come together & unite.

(I like) Getting coursework done early and not waiting last minute to finish it. That’s how I avoided stressful nights.”

—African American

“Being a student at sac state is some what difficult. I feel that some professors grade you based on how much they like you.

I loved being a part of the groups (from classes) because I was able to meet people and make lifelong friends.

I like the fact that some professors are willing to work with you. I don’t like some of the professors because they aren’t always fair. Some professors don’t give students the opportunity to better themselves.”

—African American Female, 24 yrs old.

“It is rewarding knowing I can be looked at with the same knowledge as everyone else, and respect.

There are a lot of resources and you can make a lot of friends.”

—African-American

“Great, no complaints

Great experience, always got the help I needed

(I like) getting to know your professor faculty members

(I don’t like) Doing things at the last minute”

—African America

“Being a student, a female as well as African American, (my experience) is typical of any college student that works full time and goes to school. It is hard but manageable.

I would like to share that I’ve never had any problems with professors but when I asked one of my professors for assistance in the course she asked me if I wanted to go to school and maybe I should consider dropping out. This experience was by far the worse in my 2 year experience.”

—Female African American 26, Senior

“For the most part, it’s a pretty good experience for an African-American kid. There was never a time where I felt social injustice during my tenure at Sac State so far.

The African-American journey at Sac State is an inspiring experience. So many people would love to be at a 4 yr University and get a degree.”

—African-American

“I feel like the other and that sometimes my perspectives are different from others.

My culture reflects the way I associate with others around me.”

—African American Freshman

“Being a student is hard, I have personal family responsibilities, school, work, internships, & a social life where nothing gets my full attention.

My experiences of being a black man has been hard. I am looked at as being uneducated & a person here for financial aid. I don’t even receive financial aid.

Nothing about my experience has worked. I am here 2 extra years & still don’t have it figured out on how to make it as a successful college student. Nothing has worked for me.”

—Black, Male, 23 years old.

“My experience at Sac State as a black female has been generally positive.

I can say thus far that the majority of staff on campus (including professors) have been helpful + supportive.

I really like that there are so many resources readily available for students on campus. The main goal of college is education + developing skills for the future, and that goal can be made more easily achieved because of resources many students may not otherwise have access to.”

—Black, Female

“I have had numerous challenges in my 4 years here. I have experienced a few discriminatory faculty members that have made my experience very unenjoyable.”

—a 22 year old Black female

“It’s very nice and welcoming. Some campuses aren’t as open and accepting but this one is.

I have been welcomed and have made plenty a new friends and it’s been great.

Making friends and being social has really helped me and encouraged me to network.”

—African American

“Being a first year everything is so intimidating but hopefully soon it won’t be.

I would love to share the...experience. Being a proud, educated, and equal black student at sac state. So many places can be so discriminatory but sac state does a great job of spreading equality to all groups.

—No student specifics given other than what is stated above

“I often feel as if I am multi-lingual in college. Being that I am from a poor neighborhood & African American, I always feel as if I put on this ‘face’ to make sure I am in the right environment & fit in properly.

In most of my classes, I am one of 3 to 4 max student who share my race. It was very interesting & felt comforting & different when I took a class within a learning community & it was w/ a large # of those who share my race.

Sac State allows you to be yourself. College is very independent & pushes you to form your own out-look of the world.

It was very difficult to learn all the in’s & out’s of what’s required/expected of a student, was a hands-on, learning experience.”

—4 yr/female/African American

“It is ok, there is not a lot of female specific organizations other than sororities; or at least they are not widely known.... The black organizations are not as widely known”

—black 4th Year Female

“It isn’t hard. Sac State is a very diverse campus. I believe every ethnic group is well represented here. If anything, I have a problem with those who fall into some of the negative stereotypes/perceptions that I get boxed into because we are all the same (black males).

Well I was in EOP, it is an excellent program to get into if given the chance. Getting into extracurricular activities as well would be a plus to help unwind from the hassle of school plus make friends. Also, some places to help you maximize your time here like the academic advising office, etc.

I like meeting new people, the staff, the events, the entire campus as a whole.”

—African-American male, 28, heterosexual. Married, father, Christian

“Difficult and challenging at times, but I always take from all of my experiences here at Sac State. I have learned a lot and I’m sure all of the skills I have acquired here I will use in my life.”

—25 years old and African American parent.

“It’s okay. There are a lot of resources here on campus to help me deal with academic struggles.

I enjoy some of the professors here as they try hard to provide relevant information to my major in an interesting way.

The...staff... don’t talk to each other and provide terrible information when it comes to school paperwork. I consistently get the run-around from them relating to serious questions about my academic career and progress. Also, (there was a) department not helpful for expressed interest students. It’s the reason why I changed my major....”

—black, female, 25 yrs old. junior

“It is very challenging to be a young female (African American) at a pwi (predominantly white institution). Hard time studying because of a lot of work and expectation.

It is challenging but at the end you can get through it with help. Need to look at all resources.

(I like) The MLK Center all black mentors, group studies, African American women from sac state w/PhD’s

Some courses are harder than others. Teachers make it hard for students.”

—an African American freshman

“To be a 19 year old African American 1st yr college student here is great because the campus has people my age/race that are 1st years to. The school is very diverse when it comes to that.

I have learned that college is no joke especially Sac State. They hold their students to a high standard.”

—19 year old African-American 1st yr college student

“I feel like Sac State is one of the better schools when it comes to culture and any other differences among students. As an African American I feel comfortable at this school and feel I have the same opportunity as everyone else.

I feel that Sacramento State offers a lot for everyone attending school.”

—African American

“First, being African American I already feel like everyone looks down on me as if I’m not articulate or am ‘dumb.’ I have one of the highest grades in my...class and am a 3rd year who takes 5 classes each semester and still maintains a 3.4 gpa.

(I like) GETTING INVOLVED ON CAMPUS (I am in CWC scholarship program.)”

—younger African American female w/a short attention span & hard of hearing

“It is a good feeling because I know a lot of others that are not doing as well for themselves. I would like to share that I enjoy the large diversity of students and faculty.”

—Young Black male

“it’s a blessing and a curse because of dealing with financial issues but yet getting to attend a university is something I’ve always wanted to do. Being of color as well has a ‘toll’ on attending this school because there isn’t much of African American students as I would like it to be and if there is (which there are) I have to search & connect 10xmore than the average student.

I like how everyone seems to be so helpful and that its much different than my JC. (But) I’m not finding the community that I’m looking for.”

—African American Female Transfer Student

“It takes a while to graduate from Sac State. (I like) meeting with teachers/staff to get help.”

—African American

“Sac State is very inclusive and with so many different types of people attending I feel included. The several clubs and activities geared toward certain cultures or races makes minority students more involved.

The workload has been hard but manageable. Going to school full time taking 15+ units helps me insure that I graduate in 4 years.

I haven’t had the time to participate in clubs and events and I need to make time.”

—19, black, female

“Things are a little more difficult for African Americans. We are looked down on for some reason.

I love all the BSU events.... My professors have been great my two years here.”

—African American/25 yrs old

“Here at Sac State, there has been moments where I enjoyed. The only challenge is education and me wanting to succeed by taking on challenges.

I like that people are kind and positive. I’ve found my specific group of friends and I enjoy hanging out with them.”

—African-American, male 19

“The campus is diverse and equal in opportunities. The teachers and staff here are supportive and want the best for us students.”

—18, African-American

“As a black young woman, I feel the difference in society. I think my self-esteem is lower than it should sometimes, but I fight this and tell myself I am just as smart and beautiful like my mom taught me to do.”

—18

“I really like being a student here at Sacramento State.”

—Black, 20 year old, returning to school, & a girl

“It’s fairly easy since there is no desire to B.S. I come to school, do my work, then leave.

I see things so much more clearly in coming here. Faculty in (my) department are amazing and keep everything interesting”

—African American Male Age 31

“Here at CSUS it really isn’t a personal challenge to me being black. I have just noticed that there really isn’t that many African American students at my school.

I would like to share the experience of school being very fun and accepting. I like that there are many opportunities for students to get help with anything they need.”

—African-American, 18 years old

“Challenging. In (some) classes they expect me to know everything.... In (one) class my professor stopped the entire class to hear my opinion on the pepsi commercial. In (other) classes with me and one other student being the only black/African Americans, the students turn to us for all the answers or on our opinions on anything regarding blacks.

(I like) having cooper woodson, sororities, and BSU and other programs that make me feel welcomed.

(What don't I like?) N/A -- I make the best of any experience or situation I'm thrown in.”
—black African American, 21 year old, 4th year

“There are a lot of expectations from outsiders and myself. I feel the more educated I become on my history, I see it even more important that I leave here with a degree.

Meeting several other intelligent and successful black men and women has empowered me because I finally feel that there are others like myself.

P.S. I think a more diverse faculty would enhance my feelings of belonging 😊”
—Black Female

“To be honest, it is scary. It is scary to know your worth and intelligence, but know that you may not have a fair opportunity/chance of showing what you are truly capable of based on the certain stigma—or society's low expectation of the behavior and attitude of black people.

I would like to share what an honor it was to have Dr. Cornell West come out and speak to us during such times where racial tensions are on fire.”
—an African American woman

“It is hard for an African American student to be successful on this campus. I do not like this school and I cannot wait to graduate.”
—Black Female Senior

“It is to be hungry but undervalued. To work harder just to be offered the opportunities. To be political and fight to break down what the world and society has to say about you.”
—a Type 2 Bipolar 19 year old Black Leader on Campus

“If I remain motivated, I can easily succeed. Teachers are easy to reach and eager to help.”
—Black, PR major, studious

“As an African American it is very challenging but at the same time it is the right thing to do at this moment.”
—Am An African American

African American Students

The term “African American” typically refers to those of African ancestral heritage generationally residing in the United States, and the term “Black” more broadly encompasses any person of this skin color, including those who come from or are descended from people from a number of different places, such as Latin America and the Caribbean. For the former group, either term is generally appropriate, while members of the latter group may be referenced using either term or that of their specific country of origin or ancestry, depending on where they are from and the amount of time they or their families have lived in the U.S. Preferences will vary as to how individuals self-identify and would like to be addressed.

There are over 43 million Black people living in the U.S., a little over 13% of the population. Over two million Black people live in California, a state with the fifth largest Black population in the country, and about three-fourths of Black Californians live in a handful of counties, one of which is Sacramento County, at close to 10% of the residents.

In Higher Education

The American Council on Education, in their 2019 study, “Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education,” offers the following findings:

Black students have higher dropout rates than all of the other race/ethnicity groups studied, and were more likely to drop out in their first year of college.

Black students were the least likely to choose STEM fields as their educational and career path.

The gender gap is wider for black students than for the other racial groups. There are almost two-thirds female and one-third male black undergraduate students.

Black college students were the most likely to receive federal grants and loans—and graduated with the greatest student loan debt of the groups.

[For further information regarding higher education nationally for these students, please see the [American Council on Education, “Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report” \(2019\) \(PDF\)](https://1xfsu31b52d33idlp13twtos-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-Higher-Education.pdf)
<https://1xfsu31b52d33idlp13twtos-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-Higher-Education.pdf>]

In the State

According to the Campaign for College Opportunity’s *State of Higher Education for Black Californians*, in its 2019 analysis of data:

Higher numbers of black students in California are graduating from high school and are prepared for college.

While gains have been made in college enrollment and graduation in past years, there are also serious disparities in educational attainment levels, underrepresentation in enrollment, and college completion rates, as you will see in the pages to come.

College Enrollment

Over 200,000 Black undergraduate students are enrolled in the state.

- 72% of Black students attend California Community Colleges (CCC),
- 9% of Black students attend California State Universities (CSU),
- 3% of Black students attend University of California campuses (UC),
- 10% of Black students attend for-profit colleges, and
- 6% attend private nonprofit colleges.

Black students remain underrepresented in much of California higher education, with the exception being the CCCs and for-profit colleges, both known for lower student completion rates. In California, 6% of the college-aged population (18 to 24 years) is Black, and

- 7% of Black students are enrolled in the CCC system,
- 4% of Black undergraduate students are enrolled in the CSU system,
- 2% of Black undergraduate students are enrolled in the UC System,
- 6% of Black students are enrolled in for-profit colleges, and
- 10% of Black students are enrolled in private non-profit colleges.

College Transfer

15% of Black students transfer to a CSU or UC from a CCC within six years, with only 3% transferring within two years, and 17% transferring in three to four years, for a total of 35% of Black students transferring within five to six years—10% less than the total rates for White students transferring within that same time frame, for comparison.

46% of Black transfer students transfer onto a CSU campus.

College Completion

In the state:

Two-thirds of Black adults have gone to college, but almost half left without a degree.

Of those who started college in 2010,

- 63% of Black CCC students left without a degree, certificate, or transfer
- 57% of Black CSU students left without a BA
- 25% of Black UC students left without a BA
- 36% of Black students at private, nonprofit institutions left without a BA
- 93% of Black students at private, for-profit institutions left without a BA

These percentages equate to thousands of students.

At CSUs:

9% of Black first-time freshmen graduated with their degree in four years (compared to White students at 29%) and 43% in six years (compared to White students at 67%).

24% of Black transfer students graduated with their degree in two years (compared to White students at 32%) and 64% in four years (compared to White students at 77%).

As you can see, these are serious racial equity gaps. The reasons for the disparities in enrollment and graduation are many, including:

Lower College Readiness

Many Black students come from schools that are “over crowded, segregated, offer fewer college preparation courses, and have a strong school-to-prison pipeline than a school-to-college one.” Many students are placed in remedial classes, associated with lower completion rates, despite that placement testing has proven an inaccurate predictor of student success.

Less Money for College Expenses

Almost half of Black families in California live just above or at poverty level, on an income of less than \$50,000 a year, putting them at great disadvantage when it comes to college. Some may not apply for and thus receive all financial aid possible, but even with full financial aid, students will still need an estimated \$7,000 for community college expenses and \$5,000 for university expenses. This makes them more likely to work while in college and more likely to attend part-time, factors associated with lower completion rates. Many Black students face food and housing struggles, also making college much harder to get through.

Needing a Sense of Belonging on Campus

Feeling this way improves student likelihood of staying and succeeding in college, and this begins with the classroom: “Unwelcoming classroom environments influenced by racism and stereotypes by faculty and fellow students lead to lower levels of engagement by Black students,” while validation of students is helpful to building a sense of belonging.

The report urges:

For California to live up to its promise of equal opportunity and success for its residents, regardless of race/ethnicity or income, improving the education we provide and ensuring racial equity in college preparation, access and success must be at the heart of our efforts. California must prepare more Black students for college and ensure they graduate.

[For further information regarding these students in California higher education, please see [The Campaign for College Opportunity, State of Higher Education for Black Californians \(2019\)](https://collegecampaign.org/portfolio/state-higher-education-black-californians/)
<https://collegecampaign.org/portfolio/state-higher-education-black-californians/>]

Here on Campus

The last *Sacramento State University Fact Book* reports the following with regard to African American students at this institution (Fall 2016)

255 African American First-Time Freshmen Enrolled
 (6.8% of entering First-Time Freshmen)
 169 African American Undergraduate Transfer Students Enrolled
 (4.4% of entering Transfer Students)
 1,602 African American Students Enrolled
 (5.7% of all Undergraduate Students enrolled)

Being African American

Some may have immigrated or are the descendants of those who have immigrated to this country in the more recent past, but the majority are those whose ancestors were taken from their African homeland and other regions beginning in the early 1600s and sold into slavery here for the next few hundred years. Their labor funded this nation's founding, built our country's capital and countless cities, and fueled centuries of economic growth. They fought for this country in the American Revolutionary war and every one thereafter. Yet it was only recently in the nation's history that Black people were set free of slavery in 1865, given the right to vote in 1870 (males) and afforded more equal rights under the law with the Civil Rights legislation of 1964, bringing the country closer to the democratic ideals it was founded upon. Despite such legislative landmarks and social progress in the years that follow, research continues to show ongoing racism and myriad socioeconomic inequities in the lives of African Americans.

That shared history and present day experience principally shape African American culture, and the story is one of immeasurable strength in over 400 years of oppression. Resiliency of spirit is a core aspect of descendants of a people who managed to survive centuries of enslavement, encapsulated in the poem "Still I Rise" by renowned author Maya Angelou, who has spoken at Sac State in the past. She noted in interviews over the years that this was the theme of her writings, "the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, that somehow we will rise." She once said of her culture: *"Sometimes I'm almost brought to tears when I wonder, what if all the vitality and insouciance and love of life of Black America were openly included in the national psyche?"*

Growing Up Black

African American culture is key to this resilience. While there are differences in individuals and groups, African American cultural values include the following: Family is central, often matriarchal, with strong kinship bonds with immediate and extended family members, as well as others included in the family circle. Children are generally raised with strong love and a strong hand by parents, grandparents, and other family members. Religion is fundamental in the family, and education is seen as the vehicle to upward mobility and greater success in life. Scholars such as Dr. Wade Nobles, professor emeritus at San Francisco State University and expert in African American culture, have noted also cultural emphasis placed on relationships, community, generosity, reciprocity, collective responsibility, cognitive flexibility, emotional vitality, patience, persistence, devotion, courage, integrity, spirituality, and hard work.

Pride of heritage is also important. A primary means of preserving culture, historically, is through oral tradition—story-telling from generation to generation. This shapes communication norms, whereby researchers have noted the value placed upon openness of emotion to share and connect, verbal performance and play, a more narrative conversational style, lively expressiveness in voice and body to communicate, and an interactive listening manner, with frequent small statements of affirmation or vocalizations of interest for what another is saying. Artistry of expression and cultural heritage, too, is seen in African American music, dance, poetry, literature, and sermons, and the language system of Ebonics used at times as a means of cultural expression and identity is traced back to African and Caribbean Creole slave linguistic roots.

It is also important to recognize the grave historical trauma of slavery on generations and centuries of economic and social oppression to this day on the African American family and culture. With lower financial income, on average, come the stressors of family members working long and hard hours, of parents worrying about paying the bills and providing food and other basic necessities, and of insufficient or substandard housing, in some cases. With racism and discrimination come the well-documented adverse effects on physical health and psychological well-being. All of this impacts family dynamics and may take a real toll on relationships.

Two key realizations growing up are when first recognizing you are Black and then coming to understand all that means in this society. At some point, loving, protective family members probably had “the talk” about how to survive in a world where racism and bias remain as a day-to-day reality. Children may have been cautioned to use their best manners to avoid or offset prejudice, told to not wear certain types of clothing in order to minimize suspicions, instructed to monitor their bodies so as not to be seen as posing a threat (don’t run, make sudden movements, have hands in pockets) and taught how to handle being pulled over by officers to lower risk of danger (keep your hands visible at all times, have your ID ready so you don’t have to reach for it). There were likely difficult discussions about the reasons for and injustice of this, along with a child’s bewilderment and a parent’s pain and worry.

With age likely came “double-consciousness,” a term first introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois in the book, *Souls of Black Folks*, written over a century ago and resonating so many years later. He wrote of this sense of “twoness:”

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

Double-consciousness means you are aware of the stereotypes and stigma society holds for your race, how you may be judged at every turn in accordance with these, and the significant impact this may have on almost every aspect of your life. This may make you question your worth, cut into your self-esteem, and create turmoil or conflicted feelings of being torn between the self you know and see, and what society says about you and your race. You may wonder if others are evaluating or treating you through cultural stereotypes, creating uncertainty in how to interpret their statements or actions, which may or be not be race-related. And you will likely be on your guard as you strive to operate in such a society, carefully monitoring yourself each day in mixed-race situations in a way that incurs the least amount of censure or stereotypes, but also restricts your freedom and comfort in fully being your true self with others.

Going to School

In kindergarten through high school, the educational experiences of African American students may have not been good. African American children are more likely to come from lower-income families, putting them in lower-academic quality schools with scarcer resources and less experienced teachers. Their parents likely worked long hours, making them unable to help their children as much with homework, and likely necessitating that the student, when old enough, worked while in school to help the family with finances, taking time and energy from studies. The likelihood is that they connected less with course content that didn't really include them culturally, and connected less with teachers who didn't always have the cultural competence needed and, worse, may have had lower expectations for them and, thus, gave less academic encouragement and support. African American students are also disciplined more often and more severely than their peers in K-12 schooling—for the same behaviors. They are over-placed in special needs education classes and under-identified when gifted, as well.

If students didn't do well in their studies, for any of the reasons discussed above and a host of other risk factors, then they may have distanced themselves emotionally from academics as a coping mechanism, or adopted what has been called “the cool pose,” being blasé about studying and isolating yourself in the classroom, slouching in your seat, and maintaining an aloof facial expression to mask any feelings of confusion over the material, doubts about your academic ability, or fear of failure in performance. Some may ultimately reject their studies and stop trying, because they believe that no matter how hard they work and sacrifice, the system is rigged against them and they don't think it will pay off in good grades or a better future. Some scholars purport that students may reject their schooling as a vehicle of oppression; they may deeply love learning and value education, but see the school system as institutionalized repression.

When students managed to overcome such obstacles and did well in coursework, then they may have been accused of “acting white” if they achieved top grades—“selling out” or betraying Black culture by pursuing White aspirations (educational achievement). Their academic success may cause a wedge between themselves and their friends and peer groups, setting them apart and, at times, causing ridicule or resentment.

Coming to College

This is the educational background students may well bring as they enter college. Many students come underprepared for college academics and/or they may have had less than positive experiences in K-12 that may shape their feelings about school, academic self-concept and confidence, and trust in faculty and staff here.

They may also be the first in their family to go to college, and only one or one of just a few of their Black friends whom they went to school with now attending college, because some may have not graduated from high school, others may have come to college and then dropped out, and still others may be incarcerated or worse.

Being in College

Onlyness

Across the nation in most postsecondary institutional settings, African American student enrollment is smaller than most other groups. Their numbers are lower and they see this everywhere. They walk around the campus or into an office, sit in class, or attend an event, and they may be the only one or one of just a few African Americans there. “Onlyness” is a term introduced by leading educator and researcher Shaun Harper, of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, at Pennsylvania State University, to describe the tremendous burden of traversing through academia with very few classmates, as well as faculty, staff, and administrators, who share your race or ethnicity.

This, in and of itself, can be terribly isolating, creating feelings of not belonging, loneliness, and at times a sense of invisibility, as a race. At other times and places, onlyness can bring a sense of being stared at, singled out, or spotlighted, creating a sense of hypervisibility, an intense scrutiny that can be daunting and draining.

With onlyness also may come the pressure and expectation to be a representative and spokesperson for your race, or for people of color more generally. This means you will usually be expected to speak up on issues of race in academic or more social situations with peers, and that you may well be called on to do so by an instructor in class or staff member in other campus settings. Part of you may really want to voice your perspective as a Black person or you personally feel you have to—but you weigh that against the potential cost of making yourself vulnerable, the stress that could cause you emotionally, and any fall-out of doing so.

With onlyness may also come intense pressure to succeed. You may feel like you have more to prove to others, in terms of your intellect. This means you may work harder than most to earn good grades, or you may not ask for help if you are struggling, so much do you fear you will confirm stereotypes. If you are a leader of a club or employee in an office on campus, you will feel the pressure to do well so that you don’t ruin it for all others of your race who come after you and will be judged in terms of you.

Stereotypes and Stigma

The stereotypes abound in society and at its many institutions, including higher education. Research shows that African American students face microaggressions, racism, and race-related stress on an ongoing basis on campus. African American college students report the countless times they encounter assumptions that they don’t care about education, nor are academically capable or well-read, that they’re probably only in college to play sports, that they aren’t hard-working or committed to their studies, or that they don’t set high aspirations for their education. The common stereotypes encountered are that they must like rap or hip hop music and be good dancers, and know slang and where to buy drugs. Research also shows experiences common to Black students, such as stares of suspicion or fear and racial slurs from others, being served less or worse by campus office staff or employees in college eateries, having their campus ID checked frequently by campus security, and their peers being reluctant to share class information, work with them on assignments, or even sit next to them.

Such devaluing cultural assumptions and treatment has been termed “nigging,” described by Shaun Harper as:

The process by which stereotypes about Black(s)...shape people’s low expectations for their success in schools and society. It is a repetitive activity through which Black women and men are constantly reminded of their long-standing subordinate standing in the U.S. economy, political systems, and myriad social structures (including schools and colleges).

The word hurts to write and read here, but makes more concrete the severe and harmful impact of stereotypes and stigma on African American students.

Encounters with bias may cause uncertainty, bewilderment, sadness, hurt, frustration, anguish, offense, fear, or sense of injustice. The student may really struggle with this distress, all the while trying to learn in their classes and study out on campus, which can hinder academic success. The student may also ultimately feel exclusion or alienation, especially unfortunate when a sense of belongingness at the institution is so highly linked to student persistence.

“Racial battle fatigue” is the term some have used for the experience of dealing with racial bias and the aftermath. Influenced by the terms “combat stress” and “post-traumatic stress disorder,” the name is telling. Racial battle fatigue is the heightened stress of ongoing racism encountered, where one must fight, fend off, or otherwise cope with stereotypes and stigma in daily life, all of which can take a terrible toll, taking chunks of selfhood and soul.

Stereotype Threat

The stereotypes prevalent in our society can also cause further harm. Stereotype threat is a phenomenon that occurs in situations when people worry that their performance will be viewed through the lens of negative stereotypes, causing lower performance in that situation. Over 300 research studies have shown stereotype threat in effect in a range of situations and for a variety of demographic groups, yet the seminal work began with two psychologists wanting to better understand why African American students underperformed on standardized tests in contrast to their peers with equal academic ability and preparation. “Whenever African American students perform an explicitly scholastic or intellectual task, they face the threat of confirming or being judged by a negative societal stereotype—a suspicion—about their group’s intellectual ability and competence. This threat is not borne by people not stereotyped in this way,” the researchers explain. “And the self-threat it causes—through a variety of mechanisms—may interfere with the intellectual functioning of these students.” In a series of groundbreaking experiments, they found that students may worry their performance will be a reflection of their racial group (stereotyped as more limited in academic ability) and, therefore, of themselves as individuals (as members of that racial group). This hinders performance by causing greater anxiety and distraction, on top of the stress of the test itself.

In research over the years, stereotype threat has been studied in standardized testing and classroom situations, with a range of harmful effects found for the stereotyped group in contrast to non-stereotyped groups. While it may not be fully consciously perceived in the performance situation, stereotype threat has a number of adverse effects on a student’s mind, body, and spirit: lower working memory and brain function, higher levels of cortisol under threat and increased heart rate and blood pressure, and greater worry, distraction, self-consciousness, frustration,

and/or sadness. Stereotype threat may also cause some students to self-sabotage by putting in less preparation, practice, or effort on the task at hand, and other students to become hypervigilant and over-analyze, which typically isn't conducive to time pressures or mental focus. These effects may occur regardless of whether stereotypes are present in the performance situation or believed by the individual.

There are consequences thereafter, as well: Students may question the validity of the test or task, the value of the skill or subject knowledge it is designed to measure, or their own ability in that area. They may disengage from a subject or field of study they were once interested in, separation in terms of focus, affiliation, and self-identity—at some level apprehending that the less they care, the less stress they feel during performance or after, if the outcomes reveal underperformance. This, in turn, can harm motivation, retention, and success in that area and, potentially, affect choice in major and career, as well as the student's overall sense of belongingness and engagement on campus.

Stereotype threat can occur in learning more generally, also, and not just in explicit performance situations such as tests and tasks. For some students, consequently, stereotype threat may become a continual challenge in their four or more years of college, a condition of academic life, always a source of stress present in their education.

In addition to significant socioeconomic disparities and educational disadvantages, stereotype threat adds one more reason for the achievement gap in education for students of color, while also offering further insight. Research finds that stereotype threat is greater the more someone cares about that skill or area being tested and performance therein. This may well account for why sometimes even the students most motivated, skilled, passionate, and accomplished don't do well, disengage, or drop out of a class or field of study, so great may the stress and threat be.

Research and study offer guidelines for lowering stereotype threat, including the following: Providing role models in the material being learned can show students that someone of their race can be a successful scholar, researcher, practitioner, and leader in that field of study. Presenting more challenging material as imminently learnable for all, and/or letting students know it is material that many struggle with initially but can persevere through may help to mentally prepare the student. Saying a few words of reassurance that a test is a fair one for all groups of people can lower anxiety, as can reminders that exams are but one measure of learning at a particular time and under particular circumstances for each student, and not a measure of innate ability or potential. In the event of underperformance on an exam or assignment, telling students that academic ability is a muscle that builds with time and practice can offset the discouragement. Highlighting the many different important qualities and abilities that students have can help them to see they are not defined by one disappointment of performance and give them greater confidence in continuing on.

[The preceding information on stereotype threat is primarily based upon the seminal work in this area by Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, ["Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans"](http://users.nber.org/~sewp/events/2005.01.14/Bios+Links/Good-rec2-Steele_&_Aronson_95.pdf) (PDF) http://users.nber.org/~sewp/events/2005.01.14/Bios+Links/Good-rec2-Steele_&_Aronson_95.pdf]

Those Who Struggle

Given the critical challenges of African American students in terms of oneliness, stereotypes and stigma, stereotype threat, and the other educational risk factors discussed prior, some may really struggle in learning course material or gaining a sense of belonging in college life. They are less likely to seek academic assistance, likely due to fear of confirming stereotypes about academic inabilities (stereotype threat) and less likely to seek counseling support, despite all they may be going through in their college lives. And for male Black students, hypermasculinity of gender socialization may make asking for help even more difficult, in feeling like less of a man.

Those Who Succeed

Students who succeed do so in the face of great obstacles, and for some, there is a cost. Academic achievement may cause divide with their peers in college who aren't doing as well or friends outside of academia. Some students may develop "imposter syndrome," documented in different demographic groups, especially African Americans and females, whereby high grades and other markers of academic success are discounted by the student as luck, timing, or personal likeability and social skill, rather than seen as due to the merits of the work itself. Students then feel like a fraud and undeserving of the success they have accomplished, which causes self-doubt, stress, and insecurity.

With academic success, however, also comes the increased probability of college completion, and the greater financial earnings and employment, better quality of life and health, and future prosperity for their generations that come with the achievement of the college degree. A look at the factors that African American students attribute to their success in college is helpful in efforts to increase graduation rates for more. In a study of over 200 Black high-achieving males in higher education, the following key findings were shared, based directly on student interview results:

In terms of coming to college, factors cited included: Parents who supported and encouraged college aspirations, at least one influential teacher who did likewise, and getting off to a good start on campus through such programs as Summer Bridge, or older same-race peers helping new Black students to get situated in college life.

In terms of staying and succeeding in college, factors cited included pursuing all financial opportunities, such as scholarships and paid internships and campus positions, in order to lower work hours and have more time to give to studies. Active campus engagement was also pivotal, due to its many benefits to students in terms of: gaining a sense of belongingness; meeting students and staff who could provide guidance about classes and college life, study tips and resources, and information about opportunities; and meeting same-race peers whom Black students could turn to for racial identity development and support for culture shock or bias experienced on campus.

Significantly, when these high achieving students were asked what set them apart, they felt that their lower achieving Black peers' potential was just as great, but they just weren't as fortunate to have some of those factors cited above, such as supportive parents, teachers, peer mentors, or role models, and were not active in campus life.

(The preceding section on African American college students is based primarily on the work of Shaun R. Harper, Director for the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education:

"Am I My Brother's Teacher? Black Undergraduates, Racial Socialization, and Peer Pedagogies in Predominantly White Postsecondary Contexts," and "Black Male Student Success in Higher Education: A Report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study,"
["Selected Works of Shaun Harper" Website](https://works.bepress.com/sharper/) https://works.bepress.com/sharper/)

What We Can Do

Understanding more the educational experiences past and present and cultural background of our students can inform all we do in our work on campus in teaching, providing services, and creating programs and resources.

Perhaps the most important things we, as faculty and staff, can do on a daily basis are the following:

Let Them Know You Believe in Them

All students benefit from a faculty or staff member's clear and strong belief in them, but some more than others.

Research shows African American students from kindergarten on face the stereotype of lower academic ability. The implicit assumptions often made are that Black students are not highly intelligent, well-read, academically competent or driven, or motivated as students with high aspirations. Even in that previously mentioned study of over 200 African American males in higher education settings across the nation, those over-achievers—students with top GPAs, who were actively engaged and held high office in campus clubs and the student body—still encountered stereotypes and bias from others, including being picked last for group projects, and seeing the professor's surprise or suspicion when doing well on assignments. Other research shows African Americans who perform well on exams or papers may be accused of cheating by their instructors, and that they are among the least likely to be asked to collaborate on research work with a professor or to be granted mentorship when making the request.

African American students also likely experienced lower expectations from teachers or staff in their earlier education, and this has documented detrimental and long-lasting effects. Some may have now come to doubt their abilities, as well, and may even feel, as others have suggested to them, that they are “not cut out for school,” “not a good student,” or “not college material.” Some may even have been told that they are “bad news,” and “never going to amount to much.” Such thoughts may become a painful refrain in their heads, may turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Our faith in our students' capabilities and potential in them is incredibly impactful, yet something we don't always make explicit. Sometimes students need to hear the words to make it concrete, more real, and lock it in memory.

Students will often say that such moments were a defining moment or turning point, how just one instructor stating belief in the student got them on or kept them on the path to academic success.

For some students, to have your professor or a staff member of a college express confidence in you, state faith in your abilities, or compliment you on what you bring to the class learning is an especially beautiful gift.

Let Them Know They Are Loved

We live in a nation where the terms “driving while Black” and “shopping while Black” need have emerged into the lexicon to name the experience so many have, and where an anguished reminder of the inherent value of a people’s dignity and safety, “Black Lives Matter,” so profoundly resonated in a troubled time that a social movement was born. A society where little girls, when asked which one is more beautiful, pick the White dolls over the Black ones, even African American girls, so terribly strong is the socialization. A culture where Black males cannot wear hooded sweatshirts without risk of suspicion or harm, and the former leader of the free world, President Barack Obama, has talked about his past experiences as a younger man, where women would not want to ride in the same elevator with him, of being pulled over by police when he deserved it and when he did not, and of car doors locking and purses being clutched more tightly as he walked by.

African American students are bombarded on a daily basis with such messages in an unjust world, and in college, too, the racism and bias is there, as research previously described and more will attest.

“And our problem these days, oh, ...we got a *profound* love deficit,” nationally recognized author, activist, and scholar Cornel West proclaimed a few years back at nearby Sacramento State University, in his lecture, “Race, Democracy, Justice and Love.” He said, “Justice is rescued only by something more profound than justice, and that’s *love*....”

Lovingness comes out head-to-toe in our voices, faces, demeanor, words, and actions:

Through waving a hello, giving a smile, shaking a hand, remembering a name, using a warm tone of voice, lending an ear to, or looking with respect or affection at a student.

Through giving a student the gift of your time, attention, intent listening, and genuine interest.

Through invitations to talk, collaborate, be mentored.

Through practical assistance, psychological support, academic encouragement, and personal inspiration.

Through sharing more of yourself than the position, and what you appreciate about and have learned from the student.

Through reaching out, keeping in touch, not letting go, nor giving up, on a student.

Through, for some, pushing past any personal hesitation, awkwardness, or uncertainty that sometimes arises in interracial relations and trusting in and cherishing the experience of getting to know a learner more fully.

Through deep commitment to the students—doing your best and going the extra mile to make sure they have everything they need to succeed in their college education.

Campus Resources

Below begins a section listing some of the many campus services specifically geared to African American students and underrepresented students.

Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement (CWC) Program—

Offers an Educational Equity, African American Student Retention Program. CWC helps to shape a nurturing learning environment for CWC students through faculty, staff, students, and community members who are committed to upholding the traditions represented in African American culture and creating an African-based support structure and educational experience.

Location: Amador Hall 460

Phone: (916) 278-5363

[CWC Website](https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/student-programs-services/cooper-woodson-college-enhancement-program/) <https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/student-programs-services/cooper-woodson-college-enhancement-program/>

Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars Center—

Offers a home base of support such as academic services, workshops, and events, to ensure the success of African American students or students with an interest in African American heritage in their quest toward a degree at Sac State. Students may come in to get their questions answered regarding coursework or the campus, and study or socialize in the Center.

Location: Lassen Hall 2201

Phone: (916) 278-2655

[MLK Scholars Website](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/mlk-scholars/) <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/mlk-scholars/>

First Generation Institute (FGI)—

Offers workshops, speakers, and more to increase awareness and skills needed to progress from first generation students to first generation professionals, helping to increase academic success and degree-to-work readiness.

Location: Lassen Hall 2205

Phone: (916) 278-6183

[FGI Website](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/first-generation-institute.html) <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/first-generation-institute.html>

DEGREES Project (Dedicated to Educating, Graduating, and Retaining Educational Equity Students)—

Connects students, with a focus on underrepresented students, with a variety of resources to promote their success in college, including: early intervention, academic advising, graduation support, mentoring, and referral to other valuable campus resources. Students and faculty may look on the website listed below to find DEGREES Project Advisors and Coaches and their contact information for emailing, calling, dropping by, or making an appointment to meet.

Location: Lassen Hall 2302

Phone: (916) 278-7017

[DEGREES Website](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/degrees-project/) <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/degrees-project/>

Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs (SASEEP) Office—

Encourages and supports students in persisting toward their educational goals to ensure the success of all students on campus while closing the achievement gap. The office has an “open door” policy—students may come on in or call.

Location: Lassen Hall 2205

Phone: (916) 278-6183

[SASEEP Website](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/) <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/>

College of Education Equity Program Office—

Provides advising and resources for those interested in a career in education and who are from specific student groups, such as financial aid and work study candidates, Cal Grant recipients, individuals that are first in family college students, and multilingual/multicultural learners. Services include: academic advising, mentoring, assistance with scholarships and applications, and more.

Location: Eureka Hall 437 (inside the College's Student Success Center)

[Educational Equity Program Website](https://www.csus.edu/college/education/student-support/equity-office.html) <https://www.csus.edu/college/education/student-support/equity-office.html>

CSU-Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (CSU-LSAMP) at Sacramento State—

Strives to increase participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors and help students to advance their education to a graduate program with services that include: one-on-one advising, research opportunities, graduate school preparation, workshops, guest speakers, and support to attend local, regional, and national conferences. Students who apply must belong to an underrepresented group in STEM fields, including any of the following: African American, Latino, Native American, and South Pacific Islander students, and first generation college students, students with disabilities, and students whose families live below the poverty line.

Phone: (916) 278-6519

[CSU-LSAMP Website](https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/center-science-math-success/louis-stokes-alliance-minority-participation.html) <https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/center-science-math-success/louis-stokes-alliance-minority-participation.html>

MESA Engineering Program (MEP)—

Offers students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds support to increase their success in their engineering or computer science studies, including: counseling, academic advising, tutoring, workshops, mentoring, opportunities for community service, a network of peer support, and a study center.

Location: Santa Clara Hall 1207

Phone: (916) 278-6699

[MEP Website](https://www.csus.edu/college/engineering-computer-science/mesa-engineering-program/) <https://www.csus.edu/college/engineering-computer-science/mesa-engineering-program/>

RISE Program (Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement)—

Offers a research training program designed to cultivate talented undergraduate students interested in pursuing biomedical research careers, and help them become more competent in their scientific disciplines, confident in their laboratory skills, and resilient to adversity in the classroom and lab settings. The program provides support for hands-on research opportunities at Sac State or the UC Davis Medical Center or main campus, and career-enhancement opportunities to help students become competitive for admission to PhD programs in the biomedical fields. Students who apply must belong to an underrepresented group, including any of the following: African American, Latino, Native American, and South Pacific Islander students, and first generation college or educationally disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students whose families live below the poverty line.

Phone: (916) 278-6519

[RISE Website](https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/center-science-math-success/research-initiative-scientific-enhancement.html) <https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/center-science-math-success/research-initiative-scientific-enhancement.html>

Graduate Diversity Program—

Provides assistance in the form of financial, academic, and community support to disadvantaged and underrepresented students who want to pursue graduate level work.

Location: River Front Center 203

Phone: (916) 278-3834

[Graduate Diversity Program Website](https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/graduate-diversity/) <https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/graduate-diversity/>

McNair Scholars Program—

Offers a two-year program designed to prepare students for doctoral program admission and study. Selected students must be juniors or seniors who are the first in their families to go to college, and who meet federal low-income guidelines or are a member of a traditional underrepresented group in graduate education (African American, Hispanic/Latino, Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaskan Native).

Location: River Front Center 203

Phone: (916) 278-5118

[McNair Scholars Website](https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/mcnair-scholars-program/index.html) <https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/mcnair-scholars-program/index.html>