

Africana Studies students voice concerns for program's lack of funding and faculty

By Hannah Wagner
CORRESPONDENT

For junior Africana Studies major Zaynab Ali Salahuddin, the shortage of faculty and funding faced by Africana Studies stands not only as a threat to students currently enrolled, but to the future of the program itself.

Africana Studies students attempting to register for their courses for the spring 2022 semester were shocked by the lack of classes and professors offered by their program, according to Ali Salahuddin. In an attempt to compensate for Africana Studies classes that were not offered for the semester, she said she had to register for substitute elective classes from other departments.

Ali Salahuddin attended an Africana Studies forum alongside other students on March 30 to



Students and faculty gathered at a forum March 30 to discuss concerns for the future of the Africana Studies program. ORACLE FILE PHOTO

share her frustrations, where she had the opportunity to discuss her concerns with members of the program's faculty.

Students present during the session were passionate to receive

an explanation for the lack of course availability and the harm it may have upon their degree progression.

"The problem that the Africana Studies Department is

facing is that there are not enough professors available to teach courses," Ali Salahuddin said. "As a result of that, students majoring and minoring in [Africana Studies] are unable to complete

their course requirements before their graduation deadline."

The Africana Studies department was first established in 1969 to address concerns expressed by USF's Black student movement during the '60s, particularly in response to the program's prior focus on Western civilization.

Faculty shifted the aim of the program to the study of African history in the '90s, and it has since stood to provide a space for students to learn more about the global Black diaspora.

Africana Studies experienced a major transition when it was condensed to a program under the School of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies (SIGS) in 2015, according to associate professor of Africana Studies ■ See AFRICANA STUDIES on PAGE 3

UFF condemns Viewpoint Diversity Survey



Katherine Maily

STAFF WRITER

The United Faculty of Florida (UFF) released a statement April 5 urging community members of Florida universities to ignore

the Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity survey that was sent out by the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) on April 4.

In a list of seven concerns surrounding the survey, which ranged from recipients' rights to privacy to biased wording, the group condemned the survey.

"Ignoring this survey is an act that protects individuals of all political persuasions, now and into the future," the group said. "This survey would not pass 'validity tests' in any institutional

review process, as there is no way to ensure that responses will reflect the demographics of the institution. It is not worthy of time away from our teaching and research."

Two slightly differing surveys were sent to students and university employees, with a quick message stating it would take five to 10 minutes to complete it, and that all submissions would be completely confidential and anonymous.

Professors and other faculty

were questioned on whether they involve their personal political beliefs in the content they teach, and if they believe the university supports material covering a wide range of political ideologies.

Students were asked similar questions about whether they believe they are free to discuss their opinions on campus.

However, UFF argued there are not many safeguards in place to ensure answers will actually remain anonymous. They also cite concerns that one student

may submit several surveys due to the lack of verification around who answers the questions.

Students, faculty and staff were also the primary targets of the survey, despite the relatively smaller impact they have on campuswide beliefs, UFF said. Administrators and other leaders, who may have greater influence over campus viewpoints, conversely faced little pressure from the survey, according to the union.

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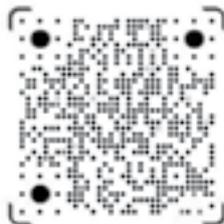


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AFRICANA STUDIES

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and Women and Gender Studies Cheryl Rodriguez.

A lack of student interest has contributed to Africana Studies being maintained as a smaller area of study, she said. As a result, the program faces a reduced budget for faculty salaries.

“We’ve always been a small department, and I think it’s because of the fact that we haven’t been able to generate the minimum number of majors that the administration would like to see, which then keeps us small,” Rodriguez said.

“I think that if we had more faculty, we could generate more interest ... Historically we’ve just been a small department, and if we were allowed to grow a little bit, there would be more students who would find us.”

Students looking to graduate as an Africana Studies major are required to take five core classes and seven elective courses for a total 36 major hour course load, according to the USF website for Africana Studies.

Not all of the department’s hired professors are actively teaching or are scheduled to teach in the fall semester, as seen in Degreeworks.

Many students that have fulfilled their major prerequisites have to cross-list, or be referred to take necessary classes from different departments, courses to guarantee their degree progressions.

SIGS Undergraduate Director and associate Africana Studies professor David Ponton presided over the March 30 forum to address student concerns. Sharing the frustrations expressed by the students, he said the current model of instruction

is not the most ideal for students or professors, as both continue to face challenges posed by the same structural barriers.

“Generally, universities don’t invest as much in terms of resources in [humanities] programs,” he said. “They are programs that focus on marginalized subjects, and it’s not surprising that they also get marginalized within the neoliberal university.

“It’s a lot more difficult for humanities folks, who often at times graduate with their bachelor’s degrees and start in a low level career but at some point, evolve into different kinds of professionals.”

Not only would increased funding serve to remedy the lack of faculty, but provide students a greater selection of course offerings, according to Rodriguez.

“We want scholars who focus on pop culture because we know that would resonate very well with students, and we also need scholars who can teach about slavery,” she said. “If the money is not there to hire new faculty, we will continue to face a funding issue.”

The value of an Africana Studies education is something Ponton said he hopes will persist regardless of the issues the Africana Studies program may face in the future.

“If students don’t major or minor in Africana Studies, then the university will not see a need to invest in the program. If the university doesn’t see a need to invest in the program, that’s going to lead to more deterrence.”



Following the release of the viewpoint survey on April 4, the United Faculty of Florida publicly encouraged universities to ignore the survey and moved forward with a lawsuit against the State of Florida. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN

SURVEY

Continued from PAGE 1

UFF has also brought up concerns that the survey was searching for particular answers based on its wording. The survey’s questions establish that there is already an issue associated with viewpoint diversity on college campuses, according to the faculty union, and is looking for confirmation of this from the responses.

The survey was initially established under House Bill (HB) 233, which Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law in June. Beyond the survey, HB 233 also prohibits the BOG and the State Board of Education from preventing students, faculty and staff from accessing certain kinds of information.

This extends to universities,

where staff, faculty and students would be able to sue universities if they believed they were being prevented from accessing some political viewpoints or information. UFF said this may lead to the spreading of hate speech, which universities would be unable to suppress due to the legislation’s provisions.

Overall, the group believes the survey is part of a larger plot from Florida conservatives to encourage right-wing ideologies on college campuses. HB 233 is a continuation of the role of politics in the classroom, which includes restrictions on discussion of race in Senate Bill 148, according to UFF.

Shortly after the approval of HB 233, UFF filed a lawsuit in August against the State of Florida, saying the law was unconstitutional.

“Through open intimidation, secretive threats and political and administrative coercion, this law is designed to chill First and Fourteenth Amendment rights, as well as the right to privacy, of Florida’s higher education students, faculty and staff,” the union wrote in a press release.

On April 5, Judge Mark E. Walker of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida denied the state’s attempt at dismissing the lawsuit.

“We look forward to seeing this law struck down in court as an affront to democracy and the American way,” UFF said in a press release that same day. “We will continue our fight for all of Florida’s students, faculty, staff and higher education community members until that day comes.”

Looking back on Bullstock

Editor in Chief Alexandra Urban photographed Bullstock on April 8 which featured student bands Hybris and mokatheband, as well as artists such as DREAMERS, Olivia O'Brien and Neon Trees.



Headlining the event was rock band Neon Trees, who performed hits such as "Everybody Talks." ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN



Singer Olivia O'Brien sang her recent releases and ended the show with some of her most well-known songs such as "hate u love u" and "Josslyn." ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN



Friday's Bullstock was the first one since 2019. Over 3,000 people were in attendance. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN



Battle of the Bands Fan Favorite winner Hybris opened the show at 6 p.m. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN



The second opening act, Battle of the Bands Judge's Choice Winner mokatheband, performed originals and covers. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN



Pop trio DREAMERS were the first to perform following the student bands' performances. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN

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USF fraternities practice harmful behavior

By Anna Ostraya
CORRESPONDENT

In recent years, USF fraternities have found themselves in many controversies including discrimination, the objectification of women and drug abuse.

Fraternities should take more action toward following the student code of conduct. Fraternity leaders should be well educated on matters of hazing, drug abuse and sexual aggression and strive to organize more meetings with their members on these matters.

In the last two months, two USF fraternities have been temporarily suspended, publicly proving the corruption embedded in some on-campus fraternities.

Pi Kappa Phi was placed on an interim suspension Feb. 24 due to underage drinking and antisemitic acts. Also temporarily suspended was Pi Kappa Alpha, which was charged with hazing violations, according to the Director of Communications and Marketing for Student Success Renee Hunt.

Although these fraternities are currently dealing with the repercussions, most issues are swept under the rug or avoided entirely. Personal student experiences with Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) stray far away from the positive public perception the university strives to maintain.

A senior USF student and former pledge of Kappa Sigma, who requested to remain



Fraternities are not being held to a reasonable standard of behavior, which allows the continuation of inappropriate activity. ORACLE FILE PHOTO

anonymous, said there was a power imbalance and cultivation of inappropriate behavior in the fraternity he was a part of.

Peer pressure was prevalent, as there were multiple times when other members would implement penalties if a member did not engage in doing drugs, according to the member.

“They would always bother me because I didn’t smoke, so because of that, they would make me do different punishments, such as more cleaning. If a person refused to drink or use drugs many times, they would kick them out,” the member said.

Hazing in Florida is a criminal offense, according to the Chad Meridith Act. The older members of the fraternity are toeing the legal line, when they take advantage of their pledges and humiliate them. To most, this behavior is nothing out of the ordinary, since it is presumed that the new members have to prove their “loyalty” to the fraternity.

Some students outside of FSL are also affected by their actions.

A 2019 USF alum believes he was roofed at a party in 2020, where most of the people attending were a part of FSL.

“I had a drink that I kept with myself, but wasn’t keeping an eye on it, since I wasn’t worried about being drugged because I am male,” the alum said. “An hour into the party, I started feeling incredibly intoxicated, [but] the feeling wasn’t similar to alcohol intoxication.”

Fraternity leaders should be urged to take measurable action, such as organizing educational meetings on matters of hazing, drug abuse and sexual aggression, in order to stop these ongoing toxic behaviors within the community.

Young, impressionable men should not have these habits normalized by their peers. Someday, they will be setting the standards for the next generation, so this harmful cycle needs to end.

Anna Ostraya is a sophomore studying mass communications.

Improve Tampa’s homeless initiatives



Brielle Lopez

OPINION CO-EDITOR

With rent rising in Tampa, it’s become increasingly difficult for people to make ends meet. Current initiatives need to be improved.

As of 2019, there were 1,650 homeless people in Tampa, according to Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative (THHI). Statistics from more recent years prove inaccurate due to lack of information during the pandemic.

When creating programs with transitional housing, the increase in rent price and population takes a toll on its efficiency. This needs to be taken into account, and more landlords should be added to this program to create more opportunities for homeless people.

Transitional housing provides temporary living spaces and supplies for the homeless, according to HUD Exchange’s website. The goal is to successfully move out and maintain permanent housing.

This is a wonderful solution in theory, but when carried out incorrectly, it doesn’t provide the desired effect.

THHI provided a program where landlords are given financial incentive to use vacant rental units to help house those experiencing homelessness,

according to its website.

A program like this requires opportunities in the rental market, which are hard to come by now.

Rent in Tampa Bay saw a record 25% increase in 2021, closing the year with a 4.6% vacancy rate, according to an analysis by CoStar Group, a commercial real estate data firm.

With rents going up at the rate they are, limited affordable housing has forced renters to pay more than 30% of their income to secure housing.

An increase this steep can look something like the average rent for single-family homes, condo units and small multi-unit buildings going from \$1,561 in February 2021 to \$1,999 last month, according to an analysis by Florida real estate academics.

Increases like this are what creates housing insecurity. To properly combat this, more incentive should be given to landlords to join the initiative and provide more possible housing opportunities.

It doesn’t matter how much the housing market is booming in Tampa if we can’t even help those without a home.

Brielle Lopez is a senior studying English



Junior outfielder Alexis Johns broke the program's single-season record for stolen bases on Friday with her 39th of the season. As of Sunday, she has totaled 42 so far this season. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

SOFTBALL

Continued from PAGE 8

infielder Alanah Rivera. By the second inning, USF was ahead 5-0.

Not to be outdone by Johns, Corrick set a record of her own with career win No. 102, surpassing the mark previously set by Sara Nevins in 2014.

Corrick finished yet another complete game by striking out 14 batters and allowing just one earned run in her 26th win of the season.

USF 5, Wichita State 3

USF had a closer battle on Saturday with back-to-back runs from both teams in the third inning, but the Bulls came out victorious in the end.

The Shockers put themselves on the board first, but USF bounced back to take a 3-1 lead with a RBI single from Johns and a two-run homer by junior infielder Megan Pierro in the bottom half of the inning.

Wichita State came back with

an explosive fifth inning to tie the game 3-3, matching USF's third-inning production with a home run and a RBI single.

The Bulls were able to keep the Shockers quiet for the remainder of the game after junior infielder Dezarae Maldonado's two-run double in the sixth gave the Bulls a lead they would not relinquish.

Wichita State 2, USF 1

Sunday's game proved to be a pitcher's duel as both teams struggled to get much going offensively.

The Bulls put a run on the scoreboard early in the first with a RBI double from redshirt sophomore Meghan Sheehan, but the game went quiet for three straight innings after.

While the Shockers tied it up with a solo home run in the fourth inning and took the lead with another in the sixth, the Bulls' bats went cold. A drought like Sunday's is unlike them, according to Johns.

"Friday and Saturday, I think we came out and our bats were

a lot more popping," she said. "Today we were kind of hesitant at the plate, but our team just has so much talent and I think when we start producing more consistently, we're going to be in good shape."

The next stop for USF is a midweek doubleheader against Florida A&M and Jacksonville on April 13, as well as a trip to Florida on April 20. The Bulls have a lot to figure out about themselves before embarking on the road trip, according to Eriksen.

"I think we need to have a gut check," he said. "Find out exactly where we are as far as trying to beat other teams instead of worrying about our non-successes. This is a game of opportunity. It's not a game of failure, and we need to change the mentalities."

The Bulls will return home on April 29 for a three-game series against Houston that starts Friday at 4 p.m. The game will be broadcast on ESPN+ and iHeartRadio Bulls Unlimited.

SPRING GAME

Continued from PAGE 8

and two touchdowns to go along with an interception.

Meanwhile, McClain struggled a little more, completing 12 passes for 105 yards and an interception.

It wasn't just the stats in which Marsh outperformed McClain — he also executed new offensive coordinator Travis Trickett's system at a higher level than his teammate. Marsh converted two of his trips in the red zone to points, something McClain had trouble with at times during the game.

Marsh also seemed to build a good rapport with junior wide receiver Xavier Weaver as the two linked up for four passes to the tune of 54 yards and a touchdown.

Although McClain was quick to shoot down any notion of a competition between himself and Marsh postgame, it'll be interesting to see how the two young quarterbacks progress leading into the fall.

Running back depth

One of the few bright spots for USF last season was the production the team got out of its running backs, namely senior Jaren Mangham, junior Kelley Joiner Jr. and sophomore Brian Battie.

What has become clear is the Bulls have only built on that strength going into 2022. Both new and old faces at the position impressed in the spring game.

Headlining the group was senior Mychael Hamilton, who mostly played special teams last year but took full advantage of his playing time on Saturday to show off his skillset. He rushed eight times for 50 yards for an average of 6.3 yards per carry.

Six other players received a decent amount of snaps, so Scott will have plenty of options to

work with from that position group.

"There's really good chemistry in that [running backs] room," he said.

"I think Cam Aiken, our running backs coach, he's done an outstanding job for us and technically coaching those guys up, but then also creating an atmosphere where everybody's a team player. We're not sitting here worried about who's getting the ball."

Turnovers still a defensive strength

A calling card of last season's defense was its ability to take the ball away from its opponents. The Bulls forced 17 turnovers in 2021, tied for 60th in FBS.

It looks like the team will continue to do much of the same next season under defensive coordinator Bob Shoop. Both defenses came away with at least one turnover on Saturday. The Green team intercepted the quarterback once while the White team came away with an interception and a fumble recovery.

After senior linebacker Antonio Grier picked off Marsh in the second quarter, senior defensive back Mekhi LaPointe intercepted McClain on the following play.

Not only is it a good sign the defense is still taking the ball away, Shoop will be able to rely on his best and most experienced players to get the job done in his new scheme.

Takeaways: Potential quarterback competition brewing



Francisco Rosa

SPORTS EDITOR

With the USF spring season ending after Saturday night's spring game, there is a bit more clarity about what Bulls fans can expect when the team kicks off against BYU at Raymond James Stadium on Sept. 3.

The team showed off its depth and talent with multiple players having impressive performances on both sides of the ball. There also seems to be a renewed energy for the upcoming season



Sophomore quarterback Katravis Marsh (left) and junior wide receiver Xavier Weaver (middle) connected four times for 54 yards in Saturday's spring game. ORACLE PHOTO/ALEXANDRA URBAN

that coach Jeff Scott hasn't experienced since he arrived in Tampa in 2020.

"Our culture is the best it's been since I've been here," he

said. "When your players love their team, they love the coaches around every day, they love their teammates. They go to their high schools and they tell their teams,

their former teammates and it makes it easier to recruit.

"All of a sudden, I'm seeing for the first time since I've been here that it's turning into a positive to

come to South Florida."

Here are three of the biggest lessons learned from this year's spring game.

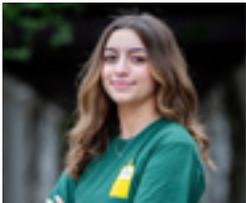
Quarterback situation getting interesting

While both of the game's starting quarterbacks, Katravis Marsh for the Green team and Timmy McClain for the White, had up-and-down performances, there could be a potential battle for the starting job as the team heads into the summer.

Marsh, a sophomore that served as backup for much of last year, outplayed the incumbent McClain who started nine games in his freshman season. Marsh completed 14 passes for 124 yards

■ See SPRING GAME on PAGE 7

Another record-breaking weekend for USF softball



Lanie De La Milera

STAFF WRITER

After sweeping East Carolina last week, USF continued its upward trend in AAC play, taking two of three games against Wichita State this weekend.

The Shockers (21-13) were

last year's AAC champions, but couldn't hang with a Bulls' (33-11) team that has now won five of its last six games.

Senior pitcher Georgina Corrick and junior outfielder Alexis Johns made headlines on Friday by breaking program records for career wins and single-season stolen bases, respectively.

Despite the milestones, coach Ken Eriksen felt the team was far from its best over the three games, and it finally caught up to them in the final game of the

series.

"We actually didn't play very well for three games and we got two victories out of the first two games," he said following Sunday's 2-1 loss. "We did not play good softball all weekend long. We kind of let them back in the game on Friday with errors and non-execution.

"Then [Saturday], we didn't execute again on the crucial situations when you have to do things. Today was obvious, we didn't execute at all."

USF 7, Wichita State 3

Johns entered Friday tied for the single-season base stealing record, set by former Bull AnaMarie Bruni, who stole 38 bases in the 2021 season.

Johns wasted no time rewriting the history books, leading off the game with a single and stealing second base shortly after. For the base thief, the act of stealing begins way before she reaches base.

"It all starts in the batter's box, honestly," Johns said. "You have

to get on to be able to do that. I can get on and start momentum for the team. After getting on, if coach gives me the opportunity, I will most likely steal. It's just something that I'm confident in doing because it's one more base toward home, it's good for the team."

Johns scored in the same inning thanks to a two-run double by senior infielder Madison Epperson. The Bulls continued putting runs on the board with a two-run homer by sophomore

■ See SOFTBALL on PAGE 7