

**California State University, Dominguez Hills**  
**Black Serving Institution Application**

**1. State your institution's commitment to address Black and/or African American student success and explain how your commitment is consistent with your institution's mission.**

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) is unwavering in its commitment to Black student success, guided by a culturally centered, holistic, equity-driven approach that aligns with our institutional mission. Our mission statement affirms:

*CSUDH provides education, scholarship, and service that are, by design, accessible and transformative. We welcome students who seek academic achievement, personal fulfillment, and preparation for the work of today and tomorrow. We embrace our role as an intellectual, economic, and cultural anchor for our region, and through our collaborative efforts, we cultivate a thriving, democratic society.*

At CSUDH, leadership is less a function of the positions held and more about the principles embraced, work engaged, the services rendered, and the outcomes we achieve. CSUDH's approach to leadership emphasizes inclusive access and transformation over exclusivity. We value student growth, community uplift, and culturally responsive education. Success is measured by the number of students we can provide access to our university, by the intellectual and personal growth and development that we can cultivate, and by the lives we can transform. Our work continues to be rooted in culturally responsive learning, equitable access, and honoring our social justice roots born out of the CSU's relocation of the campus from Rolling Hills Estates to the Dominguez Ranch within the City of Carson. Nestled between four historically Black communities (South Los Angeles [Watts], Compton, Lynwood, and North Long Beach), CSUDH aims to cultivate and nurture a healthy Black student population. Its success is documented in the achievements of its Black alumni, many of whom are professors, medical professionals, and political servants.

We have led through the founding of our Africana Studies department, where our faculty thrive at grounding students in the social, cultural, and political dimensions of African phenomena. Our Black Resource Center reinforces cultural pride and belonging. We partner with community organizations to host the annual Black Male Empowerment Summit, co-hosted with Stevie Wonder's KJLH Radio 102.3 FM, and the

African American Leaders of Tomorrow Summit in conjunction with the California Legislative Black Caucus. Indeed, we are not simply leading but helping to create future leaders and global change agents.

At CSUDH, we believe that thriving Black students, staff, and educators share a profoundly reciprocal relationship; success in one area significantly influences success in another. Therefore, our model of service is not limited to students alone but aims to enhance an entire ecosystem of support. This includes student services, academic instruction, a curriculum grounded in culturally affirming pedagogy and instructional methods, support for faculty research endeavors, and cultivating an aesthetic ambience that fosters belonging and affirms a sense of place for all Black students, faculty, staff, and senior administration.

Following the system's inaugural Juneteenth Symposium, CSUDH developed campus structures promoting shared leadership, data analysis, and best practices for elevating its Black Toros. We used an intersectional analysis of Black student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates to inform campus-wide engagement efforts. Also, we successfully implemented the following campus initiatives designed to foster Black students' success:

- A Black Student Success Committee was established to engage the campus and have a broad-reaching impact.
- New longitudinal data reporting provided more meaningful insights into the experiences of Black students from K-12 through to completion.
- Launched the Centering Resilience, Intelligence, and Blackness Scholars, a cohort-based initiative designed to support the success of incoming first-time students.
- Established a Department Chairs Learning Community in STEM to unpack barriers facing Black students.
- Facilitated three new community partnerships, including a memorandum of understanding with a Unified School District's UMOJA program, a Black Educator Excellence initiative designed to address pandemic-exacerbated learning loss among Black children in Los Angeles, and a health professions program aimed at tackling local healthcare disparities.

These actions demonstrate CSUDH's leadership and commitment to Black student equity, which is evidenced by the fact that we are the **ONLY CAMPUS** in the CSU and the state:

- To house the CSU Young Males of Color Consortium, which is combating the pressing issue of gendered-racial equity gaps across all 23 campuses.
- With four Black alumni currently serving as mayors in LA County to serve as the intellectual epicenter addressing issues impacting Black Californians, with two statewide think-tanks (Dymally Institute and the California Black Women's Think-Tank) providing culturally appropriate programming and informing public policy to uplift and empower Black communities.
- The Presidential and Dymally Institute Distinguished Lectures Series brings in nationally recognized speakers to engage with the most critical issues the Black community faces. Some of the most notable speakers were Angela Davis, Karen Bass, Cornel West, Michael Eric Dyson, and Eddie Glaud.
- Connected to community assets that include one of the largest Black media outlets, internships, and workforce development through African American organizations like the Brotherhood Crusade, the Los Angeles Urban League, and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC)

Through these efforts, CSUDH is not just a university that Black students attend, but a place where they can thrive with connections to both internal and external sources of support. We are dismantling systemic barriers, fostering culturally responsive academic and co-curricular education, and ensuring that Black students graduate with the necessary tools for long-term success, while faculty enhance their academic capabilities and staff develop the skills needed to serve our students effectively.

Our campus has demonstrated a record of recruiting racially diverse faculty with faculty of color making up 61% of our tenure-track faculty and Black faculty accounting for 14% of all faculty. Recognizing the benefit of having a culturally diverse faculty, the Senior Diversity Officer, Provost, AVP for Faculty Affairs, and Dean of Arts and Humanities have outlined strategies to bring more Black faculty to CSUDH, including through plans to launch a cluster hire in the next three years

The CSUDH Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) is the longest-running employee resource group on campus. BFSA provides resources and opportunities for social and professional growth of Black faculty and staff, including employee mixers, collaboration with academic units, and community organizations to host events of commonly held interests. Participation in BFSA crosses all employee groups and at varying levels, raising the visibility of the association's efforts.

BFSA operations are primarily supported through membership dues. The institution has provided financial resources to BFSA for special projects or efforts, but there is no

consistent practice for consistently providing financial resources to supports the group's efforts. The newly established Division for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice is developing FSA protocols and structures to support greater collaboration between grassroots employee leadership and institutional goals and mission.

At CSUDH, Black student success is not just a vision—it is a lived reality. We recognize that true progress comes from investing in Black students, faculty, and staff, as well as institutional policies that foster an ecosystem of Black excellence. Our approach disrupts deficit-based narratives and uplifts Black students through culturally competent pedagogy, mentorship, and a relentless commitment to equity.

This designation would further empower CSUDH to expand these critical initiatives, setting a national standard for being a Black-serving institution.

**2. Please state the percent of the institutions enrolled student population identifying as Black/African American for the current term.**

12.2%

**3. Please state the number of students identifying as Black/African American enrolled at the college or university for the current term.**

1,743

**4. Describe the academic goals for the institution to achieve within the five-year period in which the initial designation is awarded. The goals described in this section should outline the institution's plans to improve retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates of Black and African American students.**

In Fall 2022, CSUDH established the Black Student Success Committee (BSSC), a cross-divisional body of administrators, faculty, staff, and students grounded in the campus' student success strategic plan and working in coordination with the Student Success Committee (SSC). This partnership ensures that the goals outlined here align with broader campus priorities and CSU Chancellor's Office policies and directives. The SSC also monitors student data to identify and respond to emerging challenges,

making the collaboration between BSSC and SSC vital for tracking trends, addressing barriers, and implementing responsive strategies that support Black student success.

The **academic goals** we aim to achieve within the five-year designation period are as follows:

1. Increase first-year retention rates for Black students
2. Reduce the percentage of Black students receiving two or more Ds or Fs in their first fall term
3. Ensure Black students in need receive timely care and thoughtful intervention
4. Increase four- and six-year graduation rates for Black students

### **Goal 1: Increase First-Year Retention and Continuation Rates**

Over the next five years, CSUDH aims to increase the first-year retention rate for first-time, first-year Black students to 80%. Black students are now continuing to their second year at rates higher than the overall first-time, first-year cohort and are approaching pre-pandemic retention levels, with 71.6% retention for the 2022 cohort and 73.0% for the 2023 cohort. Increasing this rate to 80% will keep more Black students on the path to graduation.

This goal builds on recent progress and reflects our commitment to sustaining and strengthening the transition experience for Black students. CSUDH has taken a multifaceted approach to first-year success, including a reorganization of our advising structure to better coordinate efforts across units using asset-based, culturally sustaining practices. We also launched Toro Care (detailed in later responses) to connect students facing barriers to learning—such as basic needs insecurity and mental health challenges—with holistic, coordinated support. These interventions have contributed to a positive trend.

### ***Strategies for Goal 1***

#### ***Summer Dominguez Hills First Year Experience (DHFYE)***

The Summer DHFYE program significantly improves first- to second-year retention. Students take up to two GE courses before their first fall and benefit from a curriculum rooted in Servingness and the Culturally Engaging Campus Environment model – concepts that ground our student success framework. For the Fall 2022 cohort, DHFYE participants returned to their third year at a rate 15 percentage points higher than non-participants. However, Black student participation in DHFYE remains low. To address this, we will increase Black student enrollment in the program to 11.5%, mirroring their proportion of the overall cohort. Outreach campaigns in partnership with the Black

Resource Center, Educational Opportunity Program, and through parent engagement at New Student Orientation will support this goal.

*Centering Resilience, Intelligence, and Blackness (CRIB) Scholars & First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs)*

The CRIB Scholars Program is a summer residential initiative for incoming first-year students that builds academic, leadership, and social confidence among Black students through a yearlong cohort experience. Early results are promising—89% of Cohort 2 Scholars are projected to continue to their second year with similar success with the first cohort. Participants reported increased belonging, financial literacy, academic advising engagement, and confidence navigating college. We will further strengthen the academic component of the CRIB program by integrating within it themed FIGs focused on the history of systemic racism, resistance, and justice in Black communities.

**Goal 2: Reduce the Percent of Black and African American Students Receiving Two or More Ds or Fs in Their First Fall Term**

Over the next five years, CSUDH will reduce the percentage of Black students who receive two or more Ds or Fs in their first fall term to **13%**, effecting a five-point decrease from the current level of 18%. This metric is a key indicator of whether students are successfully completing foundational coursework and remaining on track for graduation. In addition to tracking this specific threshold, we also monitor DF rates in required lower-division courses and examine equity gaps in courses with the highest DF rates. Reducing early course failure is critical to keeping Black students in the academic pipeline and supporting their long-term degree completion.

***Strategies for Goal 2***

*Course Redesign*

We will scale the redesign of high-enrollment, high-DF “bottleneck” courses to align with the science of learning and embed culturally affirming, sustaining practices in both curriculum and pedagogy. Redesigned courses will support DHFYE learning outcomes, including academic identity development, metacognitive reflection, and navigation of the hidden curriculum. Learning and care supports—such as proactive progress reporting and in-course interventions—will be embedded directly into course structures.

*Sustained Professional Development for Faculty and Staff*

Faculty and staff will participate in continuous professional development that deepens

their understanding of how learning is shaped by identity, culture, experience, and systemic oppression. These efforts will support equity-centered course design, inclusive grading practices, and alignment of curricular and co-curricular supports. Professional learning will be delivered through Communities of Practice, building on a successful model in our STEM majors that has already produced notable gains for Black students. For example, in STEM, recent Black student cohorts earned two or more Ds or Fs at rates 6.5% and 4.7% *lower* than the overall student population in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

### **Goal 3: Ensure Black Students in Need Receive Timely Care and Thoughtful Intervention**

Over the next five years, CSUDH will increase the number of Black students who access **just-in-time care and academic support**, with the goal of preventing non-academic stop-outs and improving retention. This work builds on the early success of our reorganized advising model, which includes embedded Student Success Centers in each academic college, and is strengthened through holistic support provided by Toro Care. Toro Care coordinates individualized responses for students experiencing complex challenges—such as basic needs insecurity, mental health concerns, or unexpected crises—by removing barriers that impact academic, emotional, and social progress. By expanding timely interventions and increasing engagement with proven academic support systems, we will ensure that more Black students receive the care they need, when they need it most.

#### ***Strategies for Goal 3***

##### Embedded Tutoring

We will expand the Toro Learning and Testing Center's (TLTC) capacity to deliver embedded tutoring within classrooms. Rather than requiring students to seek out tutoring, the service will come to them. Faculty teaching these courses will receive professional development in active learning strategies, supported by tutors who assist both during class and in dedicated TLTC hours. This model has proven effective in improving retention, particularly in high DF gateway courses. For example, in the course with the highest DF rate, we piloted embedded tutoring and pass rates increased from 27% to 39% from one academic year to the next.

##### Progress Reporting

We will fully implement progress reporting through the Toro Success Collaborative (TSC), a platform that enables coordinated early intervention through a Collaborative Care model. With TSC, advisors, faculty, and student support teams can track

academic progress, communicate efficiently, and issue timely referrals for needed support. This system enables data-informed decisions and pattern analysis, allowing us to proactively support students before they experience academic decline.

We will also aim to identify courses that have high DFW rates in general and/or programs with significant enrollment among Black students, and work to improve faculty uptake of progress reporting so that we can better leverage our existing resources to reduce unproductive units and enhance timely, more affordable degree completion.

#### **Goal 4: Increase Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for Black Students**

Over the next five years, CSUDH aims to increase the six-year graduation rate for full-time, first-time Black students from 38.8% to 45%, closing much of the 15.2 percentage point gap between current outcomes and institutional benchmarks. Achieving this goal will move us closer to parity with institutional goals and better position our Black students to pursue graduate education and meaningful careers with confidence and momentum.

We also aim to raise the four-year graduation rate for Black community college transfer students from the current five-year average of 64.9% to 72%, aligning more closely with the institutional benchmark of 75%. These improvements will reflect meaningful progress toward equity in degree completion for both first-time and transfer Black students at CSUDH.

At CSUDH, we prioritize graduation rates as a primary metric of student success, particularly for our Black student population. While we recognize that time-to-degree and graduation rates are related, they are calculated differently and carry distinct implications. Time-to-degree metrics account for nuances such as stop-outs, leaves of absence, and re-enrollment, which are particularly relevant for institutions serving a high percentage of non-traditional and working students. Given our historical context of lower graduation rates, we have strategically emphasized improving overall, cohort-based graduation rate outcomes—aligning with federal reporting standards (IPEDS) and CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025. We believe that as graduation rates stabilize at higher levels, time-to-degree will become a more meaningful and actionable measure. Until then, our focus remains on increasing graduation rates as the most relevant and equitable indicator of progress for our campus community.

#### **Strategies Supporting Goal 4**

All previously described strategies—from increasing first-year retention to embedding academic and wellness support—contribute to graduation rate improvement. We will place special emphasis on:

- Reducing financial barriers that result in first-semester drop-outs
- Increasing faculty participation in progress reporting
- Increase the number of closed student academic support cases received by the student success centers
- Lowering DF rates during the first semester and year, supported in part by early summer credit accumulation
- Reducing the number of students placed on Academic Notice at the end of the first semester and first year

**5. Describe the academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. Specifically, outline how these goals will improve academic equity gaps in retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates between your Black and African American students and the overall student population. Provide data-driven benchmarks and strategies for achieving these objectives.**

At CSUDH, over 90% of our students identify as students of color, making traditional URM vs. non-URM comparisons inadequate for understanding student success. In response, we have adopted an intersectional, disaggregated approach to data analysis—examining both between- and within-group trends—to reveal the most effective ways to support our diverse student body. This equity-centered practice, which we have used for several years, has provided valuable insight into the unique needs of our students, particularly when addressing persistent equity gaps for Black and African American students.

Compared to their peers, Black students at CSUDH continue to experience disparities in key academic outcomes, including persistence, time to degree, DFW rates, and graduation. Over the next five years, our institution is committed to measurable and sustainable efforts that reduce these academic equity gaps between Black students and the general student population. Specifically, our **academic equity goals** are focused on closing gaps in three critical areas:

1. Completion of pivotal coursework

2. Four- and six-year graduation rates for first-time, first-year students
3. Two- and four-year graduation rates for transfer students

These goals are directly aligned with the Thriving Students pillar of our institutional strategic plan, which serves as both our student success framework and embedded equity and justice strategy. Rooted in anti-racist values, this plan calls for cross-divisional collaboration and equity-minded implementation designed to foster racial equity and social justice across the institution. Our commitment is operationalized through critical inquiry, disaggregated analysis, data-informed decision-making, and targeted strategy adjustments to eliminate barriers and advance student success for Black and African American students.

### **Goal 1: Reduce Equity Gaps in Completion of Pivotal Coursework**

Over the next five years, CSUDH will reduce academic equity gaps in the completion of pivotal, lower-division gateway courses—specifically those with historically high DFW rates—between Black students and the overall student population. These courses are foundational to degree progress, and failure to pass them on the first attempt often delays time-to-degree and contributes to long-term attrition.

#### *Strategies to Achieve Goal 1:*

- Reduce the percentage of Black students receiving Ds and Fs in key lower-division gateway courses to 15%. Over the past three academic years, Black students have earned Ds and Fs in these courses at disproportionately higher rates compared to the overall student population. We have already seen success in reducing these gaps in STEM courses through targeted interventions funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, and we plan to scale these efforts campus-wide. Closing these course-level equity gaps will significantly improve early academic momentum and help reduce delays in major declaration and degree completion.
- Increase participation of Black students in Dominguez Hills First Year Experience (DHFYE) courses to 11.5%, consistent with Black student enrollment at the university. DHFYE participants have demonstrated stronger course outcomes and persistence rates; thus, scaling participation will provide more Black students with equitable access to high-impact, supportive learning environments.

## **Goal 2: Close gaps in four and six-year graduation rates for first-time, first-year students**

The five-year average graduation rates for first-time, first-year students at CSUDH are 17.4% within four years and 47.2% within six years. However, Black students are graduating at lower rates, with four-year and six-year averages of 13.4% and 39.8%, respectively. As part of our broader efforts to increase graduation rates for all students, we are prioritizing the elimination of these equity gaps. Our immediate goal is to bring Black student graduation rates in line with campus averages, with a longer-term target of raising the six-year graduation rate for Black students to 45%, as outlined in our academic goals.

### *Strategies to Achieve Goal 2*

- Increase proactive academic and financial interventions through coordinated efforts between Student Success Centers, Toro Care, and the Toro Success Collaborative (TSC), ensuring students at risk of attrition due to financial or academic barriers receive timely support that keeps them on a path to on-time graduation.

## **Goal 3: Improve Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Black Community College Transfer Students**

Similar to our first-year students, Black community college transfer students graduate at lower rates than the campus average at both the two-year and four-year marks. Our goal is to eliminate these gaps. Currently, the two-year graduation rate for Black transfer students averages 32.6% over five years, compared to the campus average of 36.8%. For four-year graduation rates, we aim to increase the average from 64.9% to match the campus average of 70.6%—closing a 5.7 percentage point gap.

### *Strategies to Achieve Goal 3:*

- Enhance degree planning and advising at the point of transfer, ensuring Black transfer students are placed on clear pathways to graduation with aligned course schedules, streamlined credit articulation, and proactive milestone monitoring.
- Leverage the Toro Success Collaborative (TSC) to identify and intervene early with students whose course loads or academic performance place them at risk of delayed graduation.
- Expand access to embedded tutoring and academic support in upper-division coursework, particularly in courses that serve as barriers to timely graduation.

**6. Identify institutional memberships, charters, or affiliations to organizations dedicated to the advancement of Black and or African American Students.**

- California Legislative Black Caucus
- Los Angeles Urban League
- NCORE - National Conference on Race and Ethnicity
- CAAP - Council of African American Parents
- CPA - Concerned Parents Alliance
- 100 Black Men Los Angeles and Long Beach
- USC Race and Equity Center
- California Black Women's Think Tank
- Corona Norco Unified School District UMOJA Program
- Brotherhood Crusade
- Greater Los Angeles African-American Chamber of Commerce
- KJLH – Kindness, Joy, Love, and Happiness Radio
- The Los Angeles Sentinel
- Compton College and Compton Community College District
- Los Angeles Community College District
- Los Angeles Unified School District – Region South
- California Black Women Collective Institute
- Baptist Ministers Conference of Los Angeles and Southern California
- Second Baptist Church
- Compton Community Health Collaborative
- Bakewell Media Group

**7. Attach your institution's strategic plan to address the academic goals and academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. The strategic plan should include, but not be limited to, all the following:**

- a. A mission statement that addresses the applicant's commitment to serve Black and or African American students.
- b. Outreach services to potential Black and or African American students.
- c. Existing and/or proposed academic or basic needs support services to assist in the academic success of Black and/or African American students. Support services described in this section may include campus affinity centers, coursework, activities or events.

- d. An outline of the planned allocation of resources during the five-year period in which the initial designation awarded.
- e. An outline of how the institution is using or will use existing resources to provide culturally relevant professional development for the applicant's faculty and staff in pursuit of Black Serving Institution goals.

**SEE ATTACHMENT #1 – CSUDH BSI APPLICATION STRATEGIC PLAN**

**8. 4-year College/University applicants submit the following for the previous three academic years:**

- a. **Submit graduation rates for the previous three academic years for all students within the normal time and up to 150 percent of the normal time to degree completion.**
- b. **Submit graduation rates for Black and African American students, within the normal time and up to 150 percent of the normal time to degree completion.**

**SEE ATTACHMENT #2 – CSUDH BSI APPLICATION DEGREE COMPLETION DATA**

**9. Please submit a certification, in writing, by the chief administrative officer of the college or university, of the applicant's commitment to address Black and African American student success that is consistent with the applicant's mission.**

**SEE ATTACHMENT #3 – BSI GOVERNING BOARD - CSUDH CERTIFICATION BSI DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

**10. Describe the campus resources available to promote equity and inclusion for Black and African American students. Include details on academic support programs, cultural centers, mentorship opportunities, student organizations, financial aid initiatives, and any other institutional efforts designed to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment.**

Student Success at CSUDH is anchored in a set of assumptions articulated by our President. Langston Hughes argues, "Hold fast to dreams, for if they die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly." Our President believes that Student Service is in the business of preventing Black Students' wings from breaking and mending those that

do. As such, we offer a range of services designed to do just that. The second assumption relates to our utilization of the African worldview, which deploys a holistic approach instead of an individual look at the engagement of human interaction. As such, our services provide broad wraparound support for our students.

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) has a wealth of resources critical in nurturing an environment and reinforcing a culture of Black excellence for students, faculty, and staff. Uniquely, CSUDH has a critical mass of Black faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to expanding existing programs and practices that contribute to an intentional space fostering Black student success inside and beyond. At CSUDH, our approach to Black student success is rooted in a community-based model that offers a range of services to activate our students' genius. Our programs are designed to meet students where they are and provide necessary services to address the entire student. In addition, our programs seek to bolster high-impact practices that have proven to be successful instructional strategies inside the classroom. The healthy marriage of curriculum and co-curricular activities, supported by programs and services that strengthen student engagement inside the classroom, is the hallmark of the Dominguez Hills model.

### **Centering Resilience Intelligence and Blackness (CRIB Scholars)**

This Black student success initiative was designed for incoming first-time, first-year students and provides a 3-night experience in university housing before the academic year begins. The overnight experience includes workshops, community-building activities, field trips, peer mentors, and lectures from faculty and staff on campus. Additionally, CRIB scholars can participate in a First Year Interest Group (FIG) together (see more details in the following bulleted item). An academic theme connects FIGs and consists of a small cohort of students who take two to three courses together during the fall semester. FIGs are intentionally small to maximize interconnectivity between students, faculty, and peer mentors.

Despite representing 12% of our overall enrollment, Black students constitute 30% of our residential population. Consequently, CSUDH plans to launch a Black Living Learning Community for first-year students in the residence hall. This initiative will draw upon the CRIB Scholars model and provide additional support for this student group.

### **First Year Interest Groups**

We use first-year interest groups (FIG) to further our learning and support inclusive classroom environments. In the Race, Inequality, and Social Justice: *Because Black Lives Matter* FIG pairing, students take three G.E. courses together as a cohort that will discuss the various forms of racism, discrimination, and movements for social justice within the Black American community, these thought-provoking courses will draw from a variety of interesting readings, historical perspectives, narratives, multimedia, and popular culture to discuss structural inequalities through an intersectional and student-centered lens. Some course topics include family, education, politics, housing, environment, legal, immigration, health, and work. Students can pair current-day happenings with critical historical events and use their creativity to design new ideas for social change for Black communities. These courses will provide students with an appreciation for issues facing Black people in America and highlight the culture's strengths.

### **Student Success Centers**

Our academic advisors at each of our campuses' Student Success Centers use the appreciative learning model, which fosters an asset-based approach to academic and career coaching. The Student Success Centers originated from our strategic plan, which focused on the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model and the concept of cultural wealth to determine how best to serve students across the entire campus.

Asset-based advising empowers Black students by affirming their strengths, validating their lived experiences, and guiding them toward academic success through culturally responsive support. This approach recognizes the diverse backgrounds and talents that Black students bring to the academic environment, enabling them to navigate challenges and capitalize on their unique attributes. By emphasizing assets rather than deficits, advisors can cultivate a sense of agency and resilience among Black students, assisting them in recognizing and harnessing their potential for academic success. Furthermore, this model promotes culturally responsive advising practices that validate the lived experiences of Black students, creating a supportive and inclusive campus climate where they feel valued and empowered to thrive. Ultimately, by adopting an asset-based advising approach, our advisors can better support the holistic development and achievement of Black students, enhancing their academic attainment and overall well-being.

### **Health and Well-Being**

We have developed the CSU's first and only integrated public health model, which greatly enhanced student access to essential resources and services through a single point of entry. This model brings together 1) Student Health Services, 2) Student Psychological Services, 3) the Center for Advocacy, Prevention, and Education—which offers support resources and confidential assistance to students, staff, and faculty affected by unwanted sexual experiences, intimate partner harm, and stalking, and 4) the Toro Care Program. These services are not passive (waiting for students to come in) but proactive, extending visibility to every part of the university.

CSUDH's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment is exemplified through its careful selection of therapists who possess cultural competence and a deep understanding of working with Black students. Recognizing the unique experiences and challenges that Black students may encounter, our therapists' approaches go beyond traditional counseling techniques; they encompass an awareness of systemic issues such as racism, trauma, and discrimination that may impact the mental health of Black students. By prioritizing the recruitment of therapists with this expertise, the university demonstrates its dedication to promoting holistic well-being and ensuring that all students receive the personalized care they deserve.

Several staff psychologists are liaisons to other departments, including the Black Resource Center and Toro Guardian Scholars, where more than half (60%) of its participants identify as Black. Currently, Dr. Bruce Wallace serves as the official liaison between Psychological Services and the Black Resource Center, where he provides psychological support, programming, and resources to students. In this capacity, he collaborates with students to coordinate *TRIBE*, a space for self-identified Black men to voice their experiences, explore their identities, and empower them to make positive lifestyle changes. Jerrie Jones is a psychological counselor who serves as a liaison and counselor in the Toro Guardian Scholars program, providing holistic support to current and former foster students.

### **Toro Care**

In 2018, the CSU Office of the Chancellor funded the *Study of Student Basic Needs* (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018), which explored students' experiences facing food and housing insecurity and the relationship to student success. Of the respondents, nearly 42% of CSU students reported food insecurity, with first-generation Black students reporting the highest levels of food insecurity (65.9%) of all demographic groups. Furthermore, in 2020, findings from the CSUDH basic needs survey revealed that 66.1% of Black students reported experiencing food insecurity – the highest rate among all racial and ethnic groups (McFadzen, 2020).

In the Fall 2018 semester, CSUDH implemented the Basic Needs Program – a campus-wide initiative funded by the CSU Chancellor’s office to help alleviate food and housing insecurity. Since then, the program has evolved into the university’s *Toro Care* program, a beacon of support for students facing food insecurity, housing instability, and financial difficulties. Designed with empathy and a commitment to student welfare, Toro Care is a vital resource hub, connecting students with essential services and resources. Through this program, students in need can access nutritious food options, secure stable housing arrangements, and receive financial assistance to alleviate economic burdens. Beyond mere provision, Toro Care fosters a supportive community where students can find solidarity, guidance, and encouragement during times of hardship. Since its inception, nearly half (46%) of all students served within the Toro Care program have been Black. Data from the 2022 *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) revealed that in 2022, 60% of Black students responded “quite a bit” or “very much” to the question, “How much does your institution emphasize helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities?” This is a 20-percentage-point increase from how Black students responded in 2017, before the establishment of the Basic Needs/Toro Care program. By addressing the fundamental needs of its students, the university underscores its dedication to nurturing an environment where every individual can thrive academically, personally, and emotionally.

### **Career Center**

The Career Center supports students at all levels on this campus. Primary areas of support include workshopping, resume writing, cover letter drafting, Gallup Clifton Strengths assessments, internship outreach, employer engagement, and more. The Director of Career Development, Dr. Brenda Mendez, is the 2023 recipient of the DEI Professional Award from the Mountain Pacific Association of Colleges and Employers. The Career Center is leading several high-profile initiatives related to internship and leadership development, including new paid internships with the City of Carson and the City of Long Beach, and serves as the primary organizer for the Panetta Foundation scholars program, which places a President-nominated student with the foundation to pursue leadership and development in the national government arena.

### **Department of Africana Studies (AFS)**

Africana Studies is a critical component that anchors our academic engagement with Black Students and provides culturally enriching courses that reinforce their belonging and nurture their intellectual genius. In addition, Africana Studies established extra-curricular support networks that offer mentorship, scholarships, and professional and

career opportunities. Research shows that Black student success is rooted in a multifaceted approach that incorporates elements of their identity and culture. Africana Studies utilizes its course offerings to instill a high level of cultural grounding, critical thinking, and global engagement. AFS at CSUDH has implemented an approach that seeks to be “A Place Where Scholars, Thinkers, and Leaders are Nurtured.” The course offerings seek to expand students’ ideological perspectives by taking a pan-African approach to interpreting African phenomena and exploring identity.

AFS course offerings explore the lived experiences of Black students and challenge all students to contextualize how these unique realities are shaped and what that means for people of African descent around the world, in general, and in America specifically.

Outside of its instructional engagement with Black Students, AFS supports Black Students annually by offering three scholarships (merit and need-based) to eligible students. Data suggests that financial hardship is a significant variable contributing to students suspending or stopping their academic journey. Two of the scholarships offered by AFS are endowments funded by community partners committed to supporting Black students and maintaining a community-campus partnership.

The Department of Africana Studies has also instituted a formal network to prepare AFS majors to conduct and present original research at its National Council for Black Studies disciplinary conference. This activity has helped to produce many graduates who have joined the professoriate. Specifically, AFS has successfully graduated African American males who have earned their doctorate and are now teaching and researching at universities around the country.

### **Mervyn Dymally African American Political and Economic Institute**

The Mervyn M. Dymally African American Political & Economic Institute (MDAAPEI) at California State University, Dominguez Hills through the development of a rich oral and digital history project, the MDAAPEI explores and documents the professional lives and achievements of African American public-elected officials, business leaders and policymakers. The Institute also examines the impact of their public policy efforts on the political and economic development of African American and other disadvantaged communities. The MDAAPEI provides training programs for current and future leaders, including the Dymally Fellows program, which allows for students of color to travel internationally to expand their worldview and higher education ambitions. The MDAAPEI also supports the African American Leadership Training Program for high

school students and entrepreneurial directed training for local businesses. The institute stages and supports cultural events for CSUDH students and the community at large that highlight the Dymally influence on the African Diaspora.

### **Mervyn Dymally African American Political and Economic Institute – Dymally Fellows Program**

The Mervyn M. Dymally African American Political & Economic Institute strives to promote successful learning outcomes and student success by preparing students for leadership and helping them become critical thinkers committed to advancing their communities, society, and the world.

In 2022, the Dymally Fellows Program in Public Policy and Social Entrepreneurship was established to provide effective, cutting-edge leadership training to develop youth (11<sup>th</sup> grade – college) with skills and knowledge to become change agents in formulating public policy and developing local economies. Mervyn Dymally's work in the United States Senate, House of Representatives, and the Pan-African community is the driving force that shapes the framework for the Dymally Fellows program.

Furthermore, the program provides opportunities for DH students to learn how to serve as catalysts for change in their personal lives and the communities in which they live. Students can travel abroad during the summer to expand their understanding of the global African community.

### **Fannie Lou Hamer Queen Mothers Society**

To ground the academic element of the Department of Africana Studies, the department instituted the Fannie Lou Hamer Queen Mothers Society, which pulls from African culture, to establish a council of elders that would help to guide programmatic initiatives and maintain a strong relationship with the Black community. The Fannie Lou Hamer Queen Mothers Society offers scholarships for Black students and supports students in critical need of financial assistance. The Fannie Lou Hamer Queen Mothers Society represents the additional support layer for Black Students beyond their academic experiences. They serve as a model highlighting the significant relationship between the campus and the community. Pulling from our university's history and mission, the Fannie Queen Mothers Society embodies the community-based model that works to push the conceptual borders of our campus into the community.

The mission of the Fannie Lou Hamer Queen Mother Society is to promote an appreciation and respect for Africana culture, worldview, and humanity. Its goals

include supporting the Department of Africana Studies in developing intellectual, social, and cultural programs that enhance public awareness and understanding of the Africana experience. The society mentors Africana Studies students and advocates for faculty and students within the broader community. Additionally, it strives to be a source of inspiration and wisdom for the Africana community and to represent the university as its dedicated public ambassadors.

## **TRIBE**

TRIBE is a welcoming and empowering community dedicated to Black men at CSUDH, offering a safe space for connection, positivity, and love. It serves as a platform for open conversation and meaningful discussions where members share their experiences and insights. TRIBE emphasizes that Black men are much more than the stereotypes often portrayed in the media, celebrating and honoring their identity and culture. As a Black male peer support group, TRIBE fosters mutual support and collective growth, embodying the principle that we rise by lifting others. It's a community rooted in solidarity, positivity, and the celebration of Blackness.

## **Douglass Bethune Graduation Celebration**

The Frederick Douglass & Mary McLeod Bethune Africana Graduation Celebration is a vibrant and meaningful event dedicated to honoring the achievements of graduating students while celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the African Diaspora. This ceremony features a blend of cultural and academic traditions rooted in African-centered practices, creating a powerful space for graduates, their families, friends, and the university community to come together in recognition of this significant milestone. Inclusive and welcoming to all students regardless of ethnicity, background, or identity, the event emphasizes Black culture, excellence, and resilience. Through inspiring speeches, symbolic rituals, and community acknowledgments, the celebration highlights the perseverance and accomplishments of students as they transition into new chapters of their journeys.

## **Black Resource Center**

The Black Resource Center (BRC) is committed to enhancing the academic, personal, and professional experiences of Black students through culturally relevant programming and support services. Established on March 21, 2017, in response to a decade-long decline in Black enrollment and graduation rates, the BRC was created to provide an engaging campus space rooted in the legacy of African culture and community. Its mission emphasizes collaboration, civic engagement, and fostering a sense of belonging, encouraging students to participate in social justice initiatives, leadership, and cultural celebration. By promoting high academic standards and

connecting students to a supportive community, the BRC aims to empower Black students and cultivate a generation of socially conscious leaders.

### **The Divine Nine**

The Divine Nine refers to the nine historically Black Greek-letter organizations that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). At CSUDH, these organizations are dedicated to promoting academic achievement, leadership, community service, and cultural pride among Black students and communities. The Divine Nine are important personifications of Black brotherhood, sisterhood, and achievement, fostering unity and community service within and beyond CSUDH.

### **Black Student Union**

The Black Student Union (BSU) is a dynamic and supportive community dedicated to enriching Black student life on campus. The BSU's mission is to cultivate a space of love, empowerment, and belonging where every student feels recognized, appreciated, and uplifted. We celebrate creative expression across artistic, cultural, and intellectual disciplines, providing opportunities for members to engage, share, and grow. Committed to academic excellence, the BSU encourages mentorship, collaboration, and success while also fostering a vibrant environment where Black identity, culture, and leadership thrive. Through cultural events, educational programs, and social initiatives, we aim to build a unified, resilient community that promotes pride, unity, and the ongoing celebration of Black excellence.

### **Black Student Success Committee**

The Black Student Success Committee, established in Fall 2022 at CSUDH, is committed to promoting the academic and co-curricular success of Black students by addressing systemic and structural inequities. The committee focuses on evaluating current support systems, identifying effective strategies, and pinpointing areas that require enhancement or change. Its goals include ensuring that efforts to support Black students are collaborative across various divisions, sufficiently resourced, and aligned with broader institutional strategies. Additionally, the committee aims to challenge the campus community to be unapologetic in addressing critical issues related to the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of Black undergraduate and graduate students, fostering a more equitable and inclusive campus environment.

**11. Include any additional information that the governing board should consider in evaluating your institution's readiness to be identified as a Black Serving Institution.**

Black excellence is foundational to the campus. Since its inception, CSUDH has served as a historic milestone in Los Angeles and the national fight for human rights. Born out of the Watts Rebellion in 1965, CSUDH represents a shift in the Civil Rights Movement and is the only campus strategically located to address access to affordable and transformative education for the Black community and other marginalized groups.

Following the 1965 Watts Rebellion, which profoundly impacted the community and brought long-standing Black grievances and systemic inequities to the forefront, California leaders acknowledged the urgent need for a higher education institution to serve as a catalyst for positive change. They committed to establishing a new state college near the affected neighborhoods, embodying hope and progress. As we mark 2025—sixty years later—how meaningful and symbolic would it be for CSUDH to be among the first campuses in California to receive the BSI designation?