



BSI Designation Strategic Plan

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE

As part of the application process for California's Black Serving Institution designation, the following information details of current and planned efforts for SBVC, as we address the needs of Black Students, families, and community members in the Inland Empire.

701 S. Mount Vernon Ave., San Bernardino CA., 92410

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In response to recent California Community College initiatives and direction provided by the State Chancellor's Office, San Bernardino Valley College has taken steps to systemically improve "Institutional Practices" as it relates to the student experience from start to finish. Student Equity and Achievement Programs (SEAP) have been instrumental in these changes, and will continue to be as we develop/implement best practices for effectively serving those most "disproportionately impacted" (DI). Current models for "Student Equity Plans" call for the use of "Guided Pathways" framework to identify and determine ways to address the needs of the DI student demographic(s), which for SBVC was Black Students in 4 of the 5 Metrics. Our intentional focus on Institutional change of culture and practice, specifically as it relates to the success of Black Students, can be rooted in our 2022-2026 Guided Pathways Work Plan and 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan

Upon the passage of SB 1348 in late 2024, Leadership at San Bernardino Valley College expressed an interest and a desire to pursue the newly created designation as a "Black Serving Institute" (BSI), as a way for us to formalize the foundational work that has been underway in recent years, and publicly commit to a future dedicated to serve Black Students, families, and the community moving forward.



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ABOUT SBVC

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

As an institution that was founded in 1926, San Bernardino Valley College has been a staple in a community that has endured its fair share of changes and challenges over time. Located in the southern section of the City of San Bernardino, SBVC is centrally located near the neighboring cities of Rialto, Colton/Grand Terrace, Highland, with easy access to the surrounding adjacent cities of Fontana, Riverside, and Redlands. Since the 1910's and 1920's, the majority of Black families resided on city's Westside, with the foundations for local Civil Rights movements spearheaded by Churches, Business, and Masonic Orders starting in the 1920's throughout the 1940's. In the 1950's, legal challenges to segregation, along with activism in the 1960's lead to more equal access for the Black Community Members to attend SBVC from that period moving forward.

Historically, San Bernardino had been characterized as a "Blue Collar" city, having once been recognized as an "All-America City" by the National Civic League, with strong ties to the steel, railroad, and defense industries. After the closure of a major Air Force Base (Norton), in 1994 contributed to the city/areas high rates of unemployment and subsequent rise in crime rates, the city took on less favorable characteristics a developed more of a negative reputation. In recent years, San Bernardino has unfortunately, consistently been amongst California's "most dangerous cities". Previous statistical information has suggested that San Bernardino (for its population) is/was the poorest city in California, and the second poorest in the Nation behind Detroit. One can deduce gang activity, drug use, poor mental health, and incarceration rates correlate accordingly,

All of this to say, without sugar-coating the situation, our service population understandably has a higher likelihood of bringing a particular set extenuating circumstances and elements of the environment with them. As it relates to Black Students, in recent years, "Key Performance Indicators" have the demographic as being the lowest performing/ most disproportionately impacted.





ABOUT SBVC

THROUGH THE LENS OF
THE BLACK COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)



Over time, the Black Population of the City of San Bernardino has grown, with current indications suggesting that Blacks make up roughly 12% of the population (*slightly below the 15% Student Population at SBVC*).

As a Region, SBVC services several K-12 Districts from the surrounding cities, inclusive of San Bernardino City, Colton-Joint, Redlands, and Rialto Unified Districts in the immediate surrounding cities, with multiple others relatively near by. In relation to the Black Community, "**The Ebony Triangle**" (the cities that have typically had the highest numbers of Black residents/students) is comprised of the communities of San Bernardino, Rialto, and Fontana. In terms of Community Colleges in the area, SBVC is the most centrally located in relation to these areas.

In relation to University level institutions of Higher Education, SBVC is central and conveniently located near CSU San Bernardino, UC Riverside, and several Private Institutions, such as Cal Baptist, Loma Linda, and the University of Redlands to name a few.

SBVC boasts over 200+ Degrees and Certificates offerings, with several Regionally and State Recognized Programs (Instructional and Student Support Services) available for students to choose from. As of Spring 2025, SBVC's Student Population was 13,501 Students Enrolled at Census, with 79% First-Time Students and 49% of the total indicating First Generation Status. According to SBCCD District information, 8 of 10 Students within the district "pay \$0 tuition fees thanks to our financial aid", which is a clear indication of the majority of students coming from lower SES status households.



Gilbert J. Contreras, Ph.D.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT MESSAGE

With great enthusiasm, it is my honor to certify that San Bernardino Valley College boldly embraces our identity as a Black Serving Institution.

Since 1926, San Bernardino Valley College has been educating and serving the community with access to higher education and stellar vocational programs. For 99 years, people have come to Valley College with a dream and leave with a future.

For 99 years, the Black community has meant so much to Valley College. Valley College has meant so much for the Black community despite the numerous barriers that define higher education. As a College, we have been intentional in our efforts to advance Black student success and to foster an environment where Black students and the Black community feel at home at Valley College.

The College has established a collective priority to embrace our identity as a Black Serving Institution. This priority has been endorsed by Associated Students, Faculty Senate, Classified Senate, and College Council. As President, my executive team is working collaboratively to move the recommendations from the BSI Task Force into implementation as part of the Valley Up Initiative 2025-2030 (a meta-strategic plan). Our application will demonstrate serving students and employees holistically while we advance Black excellence.

We are optimistic that our long-standing tradition of educating and serving the Black community along with our collective College priority to advance Black Student Success will help Valley College earn the esteemed designation as a Black Serving Institution.

For all these reasons, I proudly endorse San Bernardino Valley College as a Black Serving Institution, without any hesitation or reservation.

Sincerely,

Gilbert J. Contreras, Ph.D.
President



VISION & MISSION

Vision

It is the vision of the BSI Task Force and its constituents to see ALL Students succeed at every level, regardless of their educational objectives. We understand that “a rising tide lifts all boats”, and therefore realize that efforts that intentionally address the needs of Black students (those most disproportionately impacted), the impact will benefit the entire student population. We are proponents of “equity” who believe intentionality in service increases student’s sense of empowerment towards success and completion.

Mission

San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) is committed to the academic success and holistic development of African American students. This commitment is rooted in the belief that achieving equity in education requires intentional action to eliminate systemic barriers and cultivate supportive, empowering learning environments. SBVC provides hands-on, career-focused education in high-demand industries and programs designed to prepare Black students for transfer and the workforce. Our dedication aligns with SBVC’ Mission Statement, which strives “to support the educational goals of a culturally diverse community of learners engaging in continuous improvement and actively working toward an antiracist culture to foster an environment of meaningful learning and belonging for our students, employees and the community.” This commitment also reflects the core equity goals outlined in Vision 2030 – Equity in Access, Equity in Success, and Equity in Completion – and reinforces our ongoing efforts to ensure equitable outcomes for our African American students.



Members of District's Black Faculty & Staff Association (BFSA)



TARGETED OUTREACH

As part of our efforts starting with the 2022 Guided Pathways Work Plan AND Student Equity Plan, SBVC developed a “Targeted Outreach and Recruitment Plan” (*attached*) that specifically addresses the Black Student population.

Collaborative efforts, which encompasses General Outreach and Recruitment, Specialized Student Services Programs (EOPS/CARE, Umoja-Tumaini, DSPS, CalWORKs, STEM, MESA, etc.), and various campus (and community) organizations (SBCCD BFSA, BROTHERS/A2MEND Student Charter, Umoja-Tumaini, etc.)...while continuing to keep BFSA involved accordingly. Intent is to remain aware AND/OR provide input as it relates to the community connections and leverage existing relationships many members have.

Regional partnerships with various communities organizations (BLU Educational Foundation Ebony Triangle/Inland Empire Black Education Congress,), K-12 District (Specialized Departments such as San Bernardino City Unified’s Equity and Targeted Student Achievement and Rialto USD’s Equity, Access, and Excellence), as well as African American Parent Councils (District and Site levels) play a vital role. SBVC aims to serve as a hub and resource for the Black Community on a variety of levels. Additional partnerships and agreements with institutions of Higher Education at the University level are also critical.

Goals: 1) establish and capitalize on “meaningful relationships” with K-12 partners/stakeholders, as well as various Community Organizations (Resource and Service Providers) with intentional reflections of and connections to targeted demographics.
2) continue to foster relationships and create/maintain a climate/culture of “welcoming success” and a community within the community.

The plan provides a detailed layout of a full academic Outreach and Recruitment cycle for the academic year, including “general outreach” practices, supplemented with specific considerations for the Black Student population and community at large.

*For the full document, please scan the QR Code below





ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

Connecting Black Students with the most appropriate resources, supports, and services begins upon application to San Bernardino Valley College. As is the case with individuals who indicate they are a part of other “at-risk demographics”, (such as current/former foster youth, justice system impacted, previously served by a special education program), individuals who indicate they identify as Black/African American receive individualized communication upon completion of the application. That is to say, designated personal follow up with prospective students, as they are alerted upon a student indicating. Historically/by default, when a student indicates “interest” or belonging to certain populations, “the system” would generate an automated email thanking them for their interest and putting the onus on them to follow up. In recent years, we have instituted the practice of “active follow up” during matriculation in an attempt to establish a working relationship with students (Black in this case) in the initial phases. The intent is in response to the discovery (during the development of the previous equity plan) that most Black students felt as though “an early connection”, or lack thereof, was critical in them: 1, completing the matriculation steps (including FAFSA and the Financial Aid process) and 2, becoming more aware/accessing Specialized Programs, support and resources, which have been shown to increase the likelihood of student success and ultimate completion. The basic idea behind these initial connections and efforts towards “Successful Enrollment” are simple...if we can help empower students during a phase that is confusing/discouraging and difficult to navigate upon entry, it demonstrates a willingness to provide continued service, while building student confidence to reach out if/when they are in need moving forward.

Umoja-Tumaini Program/Center- SBVC’s State Umoja program is central in our efforts to initially connect with Black Students. As opposed to “opting in”, as was past practice, the active follow up process flips things to a more “opt out” deal. At Umoja-Tumaini Academy, we are dedicated to empowering Black and African American students to become future leaders rooted in excellence and cultural pride. We strive to eliminate stereotypes and preconceived notions often placed on marginalized communities, creating an environment where Black/African American students feel valued and respected. Through our collaborative efforts, we foster a safe and supportive space that celebrates the unique identities, histories, and contributions of Black and African American students. We wholeheartedly embrace our students for who they are and honor their academic journeys by integrating the 18 Umoja practices to nurture their growth, resilience, and leadership. The center’s staff and faculty also support the student-led Umoja club. Umoja-Tumaini serves as the primary initial contact source at this time.



ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

In the event Black Students “miss” the initial contact with Umoja-Tumaini, there are additional Specialized Programs who practice active follow up, and utilize cross promotion type efforts to connect students appropriately, and/or the institutionalized practice of regular “Special Programs Info Sessions” operate in the same spirit of intentional action to increase student awareness/ability to access the most appropriate programs, service, and resources.

BROTHERS, “Brothers Reaching Out to Help Everyone Reach Success”, was created based on the narrative that Black Male Students, and Men of Color in general, were the lowest performing demographic in all statistical categories and key performance indicators in education. Understanding the statistical data is not at all indicative of the potential (academic or otherwise) of the demographic. BROTHERS seeks to change the narrative and exemplify what it means to “be the change you wish to see in the world”. Founded in 2015, BROTHERS predates the existence of A2MEND Student Charters and/or any formal relationship between the A2MEND Organization, BUT currently functions as such, as SBVC (having been a Institution where founding A2MEND Members have previously been employed) was one of the original Student Charters. Beyond A2MEND, BROTHERS has a unique connection within the community, and currently works very close with SBVC Football Program, as this is the highest concentration of Black Males on campus...by far.

Collaborative efforts with programs such as **EOPS/CARE**, **Student Accessibility Services** (formerly *Disabled Student Programs and Services*), **Rising Scholars** (System impacted), **Guardian Scholars** (Foster Care impacted), **CalWORKS**, etc, all seek to inform Black Students of the network of Student Services programs available. Additionally, all Specialized Programs (Black Centered or not), have strong ties with **Basic Needs Programs** (addressing food and housing insecurities, as well as physical and mental health services) are extremely critical to “Successful Enrollment”, as well as “Persistence/Retention” efforts, and are therefore ongoing throughout the student experience



ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

Additionally, there are Institutional Supports and Resource/Resource Centers, that have adjusted how they operate, to be more “welcoming” for Black Students, by intentionally hiring staff/student workers reflective of the population in which they serve. The services provided by the **Academic Success Centers** are here to help Black students succeed at San Bernardino Valley College by providing academic support, tutoring, and **Supplemental Instruction (SI)** in multiple subjects to a diverse group of learners. We take special care to empower our students with learning strategies and skills needed to become independent learners on the path towards academic success.

Library: The library can leverage existing and explore new resources to support Black and African American students, including

- collection development: continue building the library’s book collections to reflect academic, nonfiction, and fiction work by Black authors
- print databases: we currently subscribe to Ethnic NewsWatch and provide access to Black Freedom Struggle (an open-access primary-source database), and our other subscriptions cover Black-focused scholarship; our ebook subscriptions also provide scholarship, fiction, and nonfiction titles by Black authors and topics
- film databases: our subscriptions to Kanopy and Alexander Street/AVON provide many films and videos on Black topics and supporting scholarship and recreational viewing
- workshops: librarians can work with instructors and other campus services (STEM-MESA, tutoring, Writing Center, etc.) to create workshops on research and other topics of interest to students
- research guides: the library currently has guide focused on Black Literature; new guides supporting Black students and topics of interest can be created with input from students, librarians, and other campus services
- outreach: librarians will participate in orientations and all other events focused on Black student success and interests



ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

"Uplifting Black Excellence — Every Student, Every Voice, Every Day."

San Bernardino Valley College is committed to fostering an inclusive, empowering, and equity-driven learning environment that uplifts and supports the academic, cultural, and personal success of Black students. As part of our mission to become a leading Black Serving Institution, we will actively confront and address inequities; celebrate the diverse identities of our students, faculty, and staff; and invest in culturally responsive teaching, support services, and community partnerships that affirm Black excellence.

- **Continued support for Black Studies and Ethnic Studies courses:** SBVC began teaching Introduction to Black Studies with 119 students enrolled in the first year.
- The Ethnic Studies department is expanding courses in Black Studies towards the implementation of a Black Studies AA-T.
- **Faculty Hiring:** The college has recruited two full-time faculty positions in the departments of History and Ethnic Studies with faculty's whose desired qualifications are in the field of African American History and Black or African American Studies.
- **Black 2 School Night:** An annual event organized in partnership with the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA), Umoja-Tumaini, EOPS, and BROTHERS, focusing on mentorship, community-building, and student success.
- **Black Grad Celebration**— serves as the means to celebrate those who have endured struggles and will be completing their educational journey within the district. The Black Grad is more of a "family reunion" than a "graduation", that is filled with fun, food, music, live entertainment and good times with loved ones and the community.
- **Umoja Naming ceremony**— where students who most recently joined the program are given unique African names to represent one's personality
- **Black Excellence** — An annual collaborative event focused on recruiting Black and African students, hosted at SBVC's campus in partnership with local K-12 districts.
- **Black Student Success Week**
- **Ethnic Studies Symposium**
- **Education AA Transfer Degree Pathways and Support for California's Black/African American Male Future K-12 Teachers**



ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

"Uplifting Black Excellence — Every Student, Every Voice, Every Day."

- Beginning in the Fall 2025 semester, the Department of Education, Reading and Literacy will offer two education (EDUC) transfer degree pathways:
 1. AA-T, Elementary Teacher Education: Integrated Programs (CSUSB transfer)
 2. Associate of Arts degree in Education, Society, and Human Development (UCR transfer)
- The department is committed to addressing the severe underrepresentation of Black/African American male teachers in California's K-12 system, where they make up only one percent of the workforce. Through its EDUC curriculum and transfer pathways, the department will establish strategic partnerships—most notably with CSUSB's Watson College of Education and its Project Impact—to recruit and support aspiring Black/African American male educators. In collaboration with initiatives like those at UC Riverside, the department will participate in an intersegmental pipeline that guides students from an associate degree at San Bernardino Valley College to a bachelor's degree and teaching credential at CSUSB. Black/African American students will have an option to complete their associate degree in Education, Society, and Human Development (ESHD) at SBVC; then, transfer to UCR to complete their bachelor's degree in ESHD and teaching credential. The department's intersegmental efforts aim to develop a new generation of transformative, socially conscious Black/African American educators who serve California's K-12 students.
- EDUC Curriculum Development Designed for California's Black/African American Male Future Teachers
- The department will develop a culturally responsive EDUC curriculum designed to support Black/African American male students in teacher education pathways. This course will center the voices, lived experiences, and contributions of Black K-12 educators while also exploring the historical and ongoing impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). By affirming cultural identity and celebrating the legacy of Black educational excellence, the curriculum aims to inspire and empower the next generation of Black/African American male teachers. In addition to serving as an anchor course for pre-transfer, cohort participants, and meeting the requirement for Cal-GETC, Subject Area 4, this new EDUC course will provide a foundational experience for Black/African American male future teacher on both CSUSB and UCR transfer pathways.



ACADEMICS & BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

"Uplifting Black Excellence — Every Student, Every Voice, Every Day."

***Proposed:**

- **SBVC Barbershop**– To help encourage black males to complete: FAFSA, enroll in a least one class, and meet with a Counselor to complete an ed plan to receive a free haircut.
- Library Workshops designed for a variety of Black student populations' needs and interests, including – but not limited to – scholarly research.
- Library Events that highlight Black authors and Black student creativity.
- San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) is exploring a strategic partnership with the Inland Empire Black Worker Center (IEBWC) and the Inland Empire Labor Institute (IELI). This collaboration aims to enhance educational and workforce opportunities for Black students and workers in the Inland Empire.

Through this partnership, SBVC seeks to integrate culturally responsive curricula, expand access to high-road career pathways, and implement community-driven strategies that support Black student success. By aligning with organizations committed to racial and economic equity, SBVC aims to create a more inclusive educational environment that reflects and serves the needs of its diverse student population.

This initiative represents a significant step toward institutional transformation, positioning SBVC as a leader in fostering educational equity and workforce development in the region.



PLANNED ALLOCATION

Currently, funding sources and resources used to serve Black Students are leveraged with/amongst existing programs and budgets.

Those funds include, but are not limited:

- Equity funds
- Specialized/Categorical Program funds
- Umoja funds
- Basic Needs
- SBVC General Fund
- SBCCD EEO funds
- Arts, Lecture and Diversity



SBCCD AND SBVC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the “standard” Professional Development that is currently in place, San Bernardino Community College District and SBVC are working together to increase culturally competence and responsiveness, in ways that will be most effective/impactful for our students



Utilizing Equity Programs

Department Student Equity: This office plays a central role in organizing professional development centered around anti-racism, cultural competence, and equity-minded practices.

These funds support equity focused training, resource materials, and community engagement opportunities.



SBCCD AND SBVC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Research, Planning and Institutional: SBVC's Institutional Research office helps identify equity gaps affecting Black students, and this data is used to tailor professional development offerings. In addition to sending Faculty/Staff to the following types of conferences/Professional Development opportunities, participants are charged with providing summative presentations and discussions of implications for our campus accordingly: i

- A2MEND
- California Association of Black School Educators (CABSE)
- National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Ed (NCORE)
- Hip Hop Ed Conference
-

Umoja and similar programs (BROTHERS): SBVC supports campus programs focused on the African American student experience to bring in speakers, consultants, and trainers for faculty/staff development

Leveraging Existing Faculty Professional Development Infrastructure

- Professional Development: Can coordinate ongoing diversity and equity -related workshops and training sessions, integrating topics relevant to supporting Black students.
- Flex Day Programming: Existing Flex Day activities include workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy, implicit bias, and trauma-informed practices.
- Learning Communities and Cohorts: SBVC supports peer-led cohorts that engage in reading groups, discussion series, and action research focused on anti-racist teaching strategies
- The Curriculum Committee applies a Diversity and Equity framework to evaluate and develop courses, ensuring they are culturally responsive and inclusive.



SBCCD AND SBVC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hiring of additional Black faculty and staff

- Recently hired an African American History Professor, in the process of Hiring a Black Studies Professor
- Convert existing Umoja role to the Director/Manager level
- Hire at least 1 additional staff member to support the Umoja program
- Hire 2 Black faculty in the English Department, specifically with expertise in Black Feminist Thought/Literature (to support the push for transfer level English, increases)
- Hire 2 Black faculty in the Math Department (to support the push for transfer level Math, increases)
- Hire 2 Black faculty in the Science Department, for representation purposes



MEET THE TEAM

BSI Strategic Plan

The SBVC BSI Task Force consists of a variety of key individuals that play pivotal roles in/on the Campus and Community. From members of the Management Team, Leadership on the Instruction and Student Support Services sides of the house, Support Staff in various Departments, K-12 and other Higher Ed partners, and members of the District's Black Faculty & Staff Association, as well as contributions from the students, the Task Force seeks/sought to gain input and feedback from those on "the front line" and most connected to the movement (past, present, and FUTURE).

April Dale
Project Lead



Associate Dean
Student Support Services
BFSA Executive Board Member

Veada Benjamin-Hill
Member



Interim Director
Admissions and Records
BFSA Executive Board Member

Keenan Giles
Member



Counselor/Assoc. Professor
EOPS/CARE; BROTHERS
BFSA Executive Board Member

Keynasia Buffong
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Counselor/Coordinator
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