

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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## **Advocacy, Support and Success**

Bringing to fruition a long-held vision and goal for the campus, UC Santa Barbara is set to officially open doors on the Office of Black Student Development (OBSD). Intended as a hub for Black students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, the office will provide advocacy and resources and, crucially, fortify a sense of belonging.

The opening is rooted in nearly 55 years of advocacy, activism and leadership by the Black community at UC Santa Barbara — for whom creating such a place has been a priority — according to Elroy Pinks, director of the OBSD.

“We’re glad to say that we’ve finally gotten to the point where we’re fulfilling that,” Pinks said, “of having a physical space where students can find a home and the support that they deserve coming to the university, to ensure that they find success here at UC Santa Barbara.”

The OBSD was borne of steadfast efforts by the 2019 Black Student Union (BSU) Demands Team to create a dedicated space “to support the Black experience at UCSB.” Designed to advance holistic support of the campus’s Black student community, the new office will offer culturally relevant programs and services and cultivate partnerships to increase the recruitment, retention, academic achievement and self-advocacy of the Black student population.

“We bring together all of those resources to ensure that we’re speaking with our students, educating our students, empowering our students, advocating for our

students,” he added, “and really laying bare all the possibilities for them to be successful here and beyond.”

To that end, the OBSD will work with units across campus — from Admissions to Alumni, from Campus Learning Assistance Services to Counseling & Psychological Services, from academic departments to the Office of Development — to fulfill its mission of promoting an inclusive campus experience that fosters a sense of belonging and leaders of social change.

“The opening of the OBSD is a very important moment for the entire campus community, in particular for the Black and African-identified community,” said Aaron Jones, director of the Educational Opportunity Program, “and I think students will feel its impact.”

And not only students, added Jones. The office also will welcome faculty, staff and alumni, he said, and serve as a powerful reflection of “the legacy of Black and African-identified student advocacy, agency and success at UC Santa Barbara.”

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.