

July 8, 2020

Dear Campus Community,

In May of 2019, Damion Square, a student at San Francisco State, experienced racism in his classroom where a faculty member within the Liberal and Creative Arts college called UPD on him. In a space where he should have felt safe and empowered, he was profiled and persecuted. His experience as a Black student on our campus is not a lonesome one; how many Black students who attend San Francisco State University share a story similar to Damion's? There are systemic issues that are perpetrated in our classrooms and we as a campus community have to recognize and address these issues. The fact is, what happened to Damion should have never happened, especially in a space in which every student should feel safe and valued. At this moment, Black students attending San Francisco State do not feel safe attending classes at our university. If students do not feel safe on our campus, then we are collectively failing to fulfill our mission of accessible higher education. San Francisco State University must take direct action to address the very real concern of racism and implement radical reform within the systems of this university to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff feel safe to learn and grow on our campus.

There has been a severe lack of accountability within the BECA department and the College Liberal and Creative Arts in which this traumatic event occurred. The sad reality is that there have been many instances of racism in and outside this classroom. Damion is just one of many Black students who have felt unsafe or discriminated against on our campus. As the student body, we must hold the departments and colleges accountable and make sure that such behavior is not tolerated here at San Francisco State University. There has to be a commitment to cultural competency training for faculty and staff within every department and every college, so that we can fully embrace, support, and continue to learn from our diverse student population.

The process that Damion was told to follow by campus administration has not been helpful either. We believe the support Damion received is insufficient. This traumatic experience has had a direct impact on Damion's academic progress. How is that tolerated by an academic institution? This has been a failure on many different levels, and the university has to address these failures if they seek to support students above all else. Damion's story should not have to repeat itself



before there is action taken by the university so that this event does not occur again.

We believe that Damion's requests could and should be answered: discipline of the professor that caused this traumatic experience, a letter from the department apologizing to him, and a revision of the course work. Departments and Colleges must revisit their policies and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and serve all students. We have to do better as a collective. We will do better. This is a call for action.

In Solidarity,

Andrew Carrillo
Associated Students President