

AAAS president brings diversity to USC community with actions

By ROCHELLE KILLINGBECK
Staff Writer

The saying "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" has helped Brian Black lead the Association of African-American students to transmit their message of racial understanding on campus.

Black, a senior education major from Greenville, became the president of AAAS his sophomore year because the president was no longer able to serve.

"I didn't expect to move up from vice-president to president my sophomore year, but I knew I had to do the best I could," he said.

Black said he learned a lot about programming, the organization and the importance of being able to depend on members.

"I learned many things that year, but I feel this is my year because I ran for president of the association and won," he said.

Black said he has been able to use skills he learned from serving as president his sophomore year and serving the student body as treasurer last year.

"I made great contacts and I know who to go to for various things," Black said.

He also believes this is a great year because AAAS plays a crucial role in providing the campus and Columbia community with programs.

"We had that crucial time to

Brian Black

Student Leader Profile

"We sponsor programs for all students — whether they come is something else."

Brian Black
AAAS President

plan over the summer, and that's a plus," Black said. AAAS has sponsored eight programs this semester ranging from lectures and service projects to socials.

Black said it's hard to program because the AAAS budget has been cut every year since he's been here.

"It's difficult to provide quality programs with little money," he said.

He said everything the association spends student activity fees on is external. "We don't provide programs exclusively for members, and we don't spend student activity fee money on banquets and trophies for our members," he said.

AAAS does have an annual ban-



quet, but Black said they raise money to fund it or the members pay for it out of their pockets.

"We sponsor programs for all students — whether they come is something else."

He admitted that some non-African-American students have told him they are intimidated by the name. However, he said the name exists because the organization became official in 1968. "We are not going to change the name to passify people who may be intimidated."

He emphasized that the organization's programs are open to all students. "Those who are interested should come to meetings or programs and see what we do and what AAAS is about," he said. AAAS has several white members.

Black said AAAS has already received calls from residents in the community and students on campus in reference to Black History Month. "People expect a lot out of our organization because we are at a predominantly white campus," he

said.

"Brian is a good leader because he really cares about the association. Because he has already been president, he knows what needs to be done. He also stresses team work because we're all working for a common goal," Tina Lark, secretary of AAAS, said.

"Ever since I've known him, he will try to be there for you if you have a problem. He will try to empathize and offer moral support. If a student has a problem, they can go to him and he will be there with the association's support," she said.

Working in AAAS takes a lot out of Black, but time management keeps him on track.

"I have to prioritize, and know what I can do and what I can't do," he said.

Black credits his mother, Ms. Josephine Black, with raising him to be strong and ambitious.

"She works two jobs as a cosmetologist by trade and is employed by Michelin Tire Company," he said. "She sacrificed and worked two jobs to put me through school, and she taught me right from wrong," he said.

"According to statistics, I should be in CCI," he said. He said it wasn't easy being raised by a single parent, but they worked hard and he will be graduated next year, he said.

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9. Cars that can talk.
8. "Do Not Remove Under Penalty Of Law" tags on mattresses.
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2. Did we mention the pop quiz?
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