

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2020-1003

TITLE: Resolution Celebrating Black History Month

AUTHOR(S): Senator Marcus Nelson

SPONSOR(S): Senator Tyler Kendrick, Senator Kevin Marti, Black Student Union President Ashley Garner, Senator Stephen Singleton, Senator Wynton White, Senator Thelwell Lloyd, Gator Caucus Leader Gabbi Hernandez, Leadership & Service Chair Lauredan Official, Senator Jessica Jesurajan

WHEREAS, Black History Month is celebrated each year during the month of February to acknowledge and celebrate the history, culture, and contributions of African-Americans throughout their struggle for freedom and equality in art, science, entertainment, education, politics, and sports [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Negro History Week, the predecessor to Black History Month, was created by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and first celebrated in February 1926 [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Negro History Week was expanded into Black History Month in 1976 by President Gerald Ford, who urged more Americans to recognize the contributions of African-Americans to America's life and culture [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Black History Month is a time to reflect on the struggles and victories of Black and African-Americans throughout our country's history and to recognize their numerous contributions to this nation; and,

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 47.8 million Black or African-American residents in the United States as of 2018 [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida community consists of students with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds; and,

WHEREAS, 6.01% of the University of Florida's enrollment is comprised of Black or African-American students as of 2018 [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the black community has contributed immensely to the success and prosperity of the University of Florida since desegregation in 1958; and

WHEREAS, W. George Allen, a civil rights activist who in 1962 was the first African-American to graduate from the University of Florida, passed away peacefully at the age of 83 on November 7, 2019 [4]; and,

WHEREAS, Denise Griffiths, an English major, student advocate and prominent member of the black community at UF, passed away at the age of 21 on January 29, 2020 [5]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2019, the University of Florida was ranked first in the nation for African American female faculty members in tenure or tenure-track positions in engineering [6]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida's Black Affairs aims to create, sustain, promote, and affirm Black scholarship, culture, history, and leadership [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida's Black Student Union hosts various events to celebrate Black History Month in partnership with many other student organizations; and

WHEREAS, the rebuilt Institute of Black Culture was reopened on Saturday, November 16, 2019, to serve as a home for black community building and cultural enrichment at the University of Florida [8]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Government must remain committed to supporting students and constantly working to become more culturally aware and inclusive; and

WHEREAS, although Black History Month is an annual opportunity to celebrate progress, it is also a time to solemnly remember the work of those who fought for that progress, and continue to march on until victory is won; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the continued significance of Black History Month as an important time to celebrate the contributions of Black and African-Americans to this nation's history.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate celebrates the positive impact members of the Black and African-American community continue to have at the University of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate is committed to supporting initiatives aimed at encouraging the continued recruitment and retention of Black and African-American faculty at the University of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate is committed to supporting initiatives aimed at increasing the black and African-American population at the University of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate proclaims February 1st through February 29th as Black History Month and calls upon the student body of the University of Florida to come together to embrace and celebrate the Black and African-American community.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President W. Kent Fuchs, Provost Joseph Glover, Chief Diversity Officer Antonio Farias, Vice President of Student Affairs D'Andra Mull, Multicultural and Diversity Affairs Senior Director Will Atkins, Director of Black Affairs Carl Simien, and Black Student Union President Ashley Garner.

- [1] <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/commemorative-observations/african-american.php>
- [2] <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2020/black-history-month.html>
- [3] <https://ir.aa.ufl.edu/uffacts/enrollment-1/>
- [4] https://www.alligator.org/news/article_9caeb136-01e9-11ea-8740-6bd3e48d12dc.html
- [5] https://www.alligator.org/news/article_0e1f514e-461f-11ea-8d78-174be4fea772.html
- [6] https://www.alligator.org/news/article_33d03924-ee1f-11e9-97a9-57f92bb5906e.html
- [7] <https://blackaffairs.multicultural.ufl.edu/>
- [8] https://www.alligator.org/news/article_b2376e76-cabc-11e9-a759-73ff7464f054.html