



Black Student Alliance

The Black Student Alliance in the Bay Area, founded in May 1972, grew out of a transitional period on the campuses across the country during which the rhetoric and flamboyance of the Black student movement gave way to the need for more concrete work to meet the practical needs of the students.

There had previously been calls for unity between the Black community and Black students, but there was still alienation between the two as well as a serious lack of communication and unity among Black students themselves.

With these conditions in mind, several Black student unions in the Bay Area pulled together to form the Black Student Alliance with the goal of creating concrete programs on the campus that would unify the student body and Black students with the Black community.

The programs devised fall under two broad categories—those necessary for the students' basic survival, and those required for a high quality of education. Survival programs include financial aid, child care, food, and transportation. Educational needs include relevant courses, progressive attitudes of instructors, fieldwork, and books and supplies.

In order to make Bay Area colleges better serve and be more responsible to the surrounding poor and oppressed communities, the Black Student Alliance has instituted a program for free books and supplies; a free transportation program; child care services; a financial aid program; a food program serving good, nutritious food at reasonable prices; and the initiation of relevant courses along with the demand for better instructors.

The alliance has also created and become involved in numerous programs in the community such as sickle-cell anemia testing; tuberculosis testing; free health clinics; the Seniors Against a Fearful Environment (SAFE) Program of the Black Panther Party; a shoe factory; and local election work.

Funds for the alliance's programs come primarily from the schools, student government, individual and organizational donations, and various fund-raising benefits.

As the students and community work together to achieve community control of college boards, they can unite in demanding significant input and participation in the decision-making processes of the schools and at the same time make the schools more relevant to the community.

I. What programs can unify students?

A. Needs of Black students for basic survival

1. Financial aid
2. Child care
3. Lunch or dinner
4. Transportation

B. Needs of students in education

1. Relevant courses
2. Attitudes of instructors
3. Fieldwork
4. Books and supplies

C. Some programs enacted in the alliance

1. The fight for financial aid
2. The fight for child care
3. The fight for better food at cheaper prices
4. The free transportation program
5. Constant struggle for relevant courses and better instructors; initiation of courses
6. Free books and supplies program

D. Ultimately making schools serve and be responsible to the surrounding poor and oppressed communities

II. Unifying students with the community

A. History of relationships between Black students and the Black community

1. In the South, North, and West
2. Difference between two-year colleges, four-year colleges, private and public

B. Working in survival programs

1. Health programs

- a. Sickle-cell anemia testing
 - b. Tuberculosis testing
 - c. Students working in free health clinics
 - 2. SAFE Program
 - 3. Shoe factory
 - C. Working in local elections
- III. Strengthening programs
- A. Funds from the schools, student governments
 - B. Eventual community control of school boards
 - 1. In the process of achieving community control of neighborhood schools, students and the nearby community can unite in demanding real input and participation in the decision-making process