

*BSU demonstrates political strength and unity

By KEELEY SHEEHAN
Staff Writer

The Black Student Union (BSU) celebrated Black Solidarity Day this past Monday. The national event that began in 1969 at Brooklyn College is held every year on the Monday before Election Day to recognize the strength of the African American community.

"Black Solidarity Day allows society and the student body to know the importance of what the black community contributes to society," said William Donovan, BSU president.

The event opened with a rendition of the Black National Anthem, "Lift up Your Voice and Sing," and a walk from the Student Union to Capen Hall. Students stopped to show their support in the Promenade and Founder's Plaza. Though rainy weather cut the walk short, it did not deter the group's enthusiasm, according to Patrice Gordon, BSU vice president.

"People seem to have enjoyed it," she said.

After the walk, James Pappas, Ph.D., associate professor of African American Studies, gave a speech about the importance of black unity amid the red, black and green balloons decorating the Union. The colors represented the Pan-African flag, a symbol of black pride, according to a pamphlet distributed by the BSU.

Students made pillows with African fabrics and were able to visit booths set up by various

clubs and organizations to promote their groups.

The UB Step Troupe was present with their first-place trophy from the recent Buffalo State Step Competition in hand. UB Step Troupe President Herlynnne Pierre attributed the group's success in part to the unity advocated by Black Solidarity Day and the BSU.

"The BSU is a club that people look up to. It represents all the minority clubs on campus," she said. "We're excited to be here and promote unity within our own club."

The African SA (ASA) also set up a table in the Union. According to Fadima Kamara, a member of the ASA and sophomore communication major, Black Solidarity Day helps to draw students' attention to the many opportunities available to them on campus.

"It brings awareness to the black community on campus, to let people know we're here and can make a difference," Kamara said. "We need to stick together and support each other. If we don't support each other, who will?"

While the main focus of Black Solidarity Day is the social and political strength of African Americans, the day represents all minority groups, according to Donovan.

"It gives students the opportunity to learn about what other minorities contribute to the US," he said. "It's a chance to learn more about other people."

Because it is held right before Election Day, Black Solidarity Day

reminds people of the importance of political awareness. Going even beyond issues of race, it serves to remind people of the problems facing the world as a whole.

"Everyone thinks there's nothing left to fight for," said Kevin Southern, a sophomore political science major. "We need to recognize that there are things wrong with society."

He noted problems with the government, the economy and the war in Iraq as just a few of the issues facing the world today.

"It's important to take time out to realize what's going on," he said.

According to Donovan, those observing and supporting Black Solidarity Day traditionally forgo participation in any political, economic or social affairs.

"With this peaceful absence, African Americans and others passively oppose racism, as well as social and civil injustices, on a global level," Southern said.

Donovan encouraged Black Solidarity Day supporters to wear all black to show their unity and support for the cause.

"I think it's amazing how you pass the same people (on your way) to class everyday, but for everyone to come together as one, it's beautiful to see," said Elijah Coleman, a sophomore theater and dance major. "It's not something you see everyday."

E-mail: spectrum-news@buffalo.edu