

# 39. Black History Month: Representation Matters

## **Gavin Kelly**

You're listening to beyond 1894, a podcast dedicated to updating you on research, innovation and campus life happening at Louisiana Tech University.

## **La'Dereka Christian**

You're listening to beyond 1894. First off, I would like to say Happy Black History Month. Just to start with a couple introductions. My name is La'Dereka Christian. I am a senior finance major with a minor in Human Development and Family Science. And I currently serve as the Black Student Union president for this current school year.

## **Max Broussard**

Hello, I'm Max Broussard. I'm a senior in mechanical engineering from Broers, Louisiana, and I currently serve in multiple executive positions in different organizations on campus, some including the African American male initiative liaison for the Black Student Union, as well as the director of Campus Activities for student government association.

## **Donovan Turner**

What's going on everybody? This is Donovan Turner. I'm a member of faculty staff here at Louisiana Tech University. I serve as the tops coordinator in the Office of Financial Aid. I graduated Louisiana Tech University and sociology minoring in history, and political science last spring, so the spring of 2020, Sona 2021 saris when I graduated,

## **La'Dereka Christian**

alright, so we just want to kind of get started with some conversations. Um, I guess we can kind of talk about our journeys of like how we kind of came to take, especially being African American students that are predominately white institution. So for me, I know, I wanted to do business, and I'm a research person, so I kind of did my research on what universities will be best. And for me, the College of Business here, Louisiana Tech was tops here, especially like in their research and different things that they were doing for different programs within the college. And so that's kind of what made me come here. And then when I got here on campus, just meeting some of the people here in the community, is really what kind of drew me to kind of start here fall of 2018. So

## **Max Broussard**

um, for me, you know, being from South Louisiana, right, you know, 20 minutes outside of Lafayette. Both my parents graduated from USL as I like to call it now the University of Louisiana Lafayette. So wanting to go into engineering, some of my top choices to stay in state war, UL L and Louisiana Tech. And after I tore Louisiana Tech, I really felt that same, you know, community feel La'Dereka had talked about, and I still wasn't sure, it really wasn't until I came to orientation that I felt at home and felt

comfortable coming to tech is when I met some administrators, I met a one of the OSU that had orientation student leaders, Michael love it. And all he had to say was, you know, we got you. And, and that moment, I just felt, you know, good about coming to tech. And so that's whenever my journey of tech really started.

### **Donovan Turner**

To be completely honest, I did not want to come to take at first I graduated Hainesville High School, where the blacks, the proportion of black students started to grow. But the opportunities for black students were not growing, it was very stale. So with a lot of the colleges that came it was I won't even say mostly it was all PWI colleges, they came for when we had college fairs, college days and things like that. So we never had like Grambling or southern or any other HBCUs or multicultural colleges come to, you know, just to give us a little exposure to, you know, other other forms of or other levels of education. I wanted to go to Grambling. Originally, I was going to go to grandma had already had the acceptance letter, scholarship letters, all of that stuff. But in 2016 was the year that tops crashed. And so that impacted a lot of my decision moving forward with my education. I had to go with the money went, so no money brought me here to tape. So I was here. A lot of people just took me under their wing made me feel at home. And I did I may take my home, and I make the most out of the opportunities that were given to me here.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Okay, so I know, within the past, I'd say two years or so, Dr. Guice, the university has made some excellent strides towards diversity, equity and inclusion. So I guess we can kind of talk about what how do we feel. Now, what do we feel like we still have to go? What do we feel like it's changed that kind of thing as the climate change versus students. We can kind of open up that conversation.

### **Donovan Turner**

I will say in 2016 was a very Different time. Being here as a student, um, we're in the heat of election, all of this stuff. So everything was just going down on campus. There a lot of videos getting, you know, passed around campus, a lot of signs being hung up around campus, it was a very tough time to be a black student, really any student of colors, it was a really tough time here. On campus, I will say that, from 16 to 18, from 18, to now and just overall, cultural competence has increased, I will say. So now people can't, not saying that it was ever an excuse, but people can't use an excuse of saying, I didn't know. Because now we have all these things available. All these people speaking so many voices are being heard. Now, I'm not saying that this is by far, what we stop. So always work to be done. But there's definitely been a positive shift here on campus as far as the climate, student bodies, faculty, staff, all of that stuff. Since 2016. I hope to see more in the future. very hopeful for that.

### **Max Broussard**

Yeah, I can definitely agree with you, Donovan. I know I came, we started, me and La'Dereka, started fall of 2018. And just seeing the growth from there, you know, and from going from having one African American Dean now having two African American Dean's both in you know, student activities that are directly impacting students, as well as having Dr. Wood serving as a vice president. Just a representation growing, you know, an administrators really trying to hear every corner of the student body from every demographic come every minority to make the best decisions for him. I think that's

been the biggest change. But it's also has been the mentality of the students. You know, I remember listening to stuff in the listen to conversations and OMA talking about like, Well, why don't we have black student recruiters and you know, Dean speed being like, well, African Americans don't fly, and then seeing a surge of more African American student recruiters. Same thing with OSLs, I mean, just seeing more going from having one a year to a year jumps to four, three. So it's, it's the constant progress and constant improvement seen a lot of change recently.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah, I think for me, it's kind of crazy, because I would definitely say the job's not finished, and is nowhere near done. But I think I'm very appreciative. I was having a conversation with some female student leaders, black female student leaders at NACA this past weekend. And we got into the conversation of, we had a student who she was actually the founding president of Black Student Union at her school. And so just kind of talking to her and you know, her getting some perspective from me about what she could do better and different ideas and stuff like that. And, you know, I told her because she was saying that their university is predominantly Native American, I think. And so she was saying the minorities aren't necessarily minority. But she said, They'll predominant is still white students. But it's still a good minority population, because originally, it was like Native American land. And so just telling her about how it's crazy how your follows are a direct reflection of your leadership, because for us, I think it started with Dr. Gates, and it trickled down. And so you see these things kind of changing within not only, you know, Dr. Guice, but then it trickles down to the vice president than the Deans you know, and then it trickles down to faculty and staff and trickles down to students. And so I think that the guys has done a great job of actually sitting and taking time to listen to us, as black students about what we need. And actually not just listening, but like putting those things into action. And so that's been a big thing that I think has really helped us to move forward. But at the same time, here we are in 2022, still having first you know, and so, with that, I mean, last year, we got towards appointment the year before we you know, Dean love on. And so, this year, having the second shout out to you know, Miss Sydney Gant, who just became the second black woman to hold the title of Miss Louisiana Tech. And so we're still kind of making those first strides, even in 2022. And so I think we still have ways to go, but I'm excited to see the progress that we make in the coming years.

### **Donovan Turner**

And also the goal is I think now we're still having so many firsts, but it's important that the first don't become the last. And it's important that we make it to a point where all of these firsts aren't needed, because we've been there done that. But yeah, like you said, I think we we are on a trajectory. Big shout out to Dr. Guice because he didn't have to do what he did. As far as The state of black Tech students, the zones that we were on, every weekend, every other week, a lot of college presidents, I know probably wouldn't have taken the time out of their Sunday or whenever it was, we're having those meetings, just to sit and listen, and be open enough to just hear our experiences, especially in the heat of like, all the emotions that were going on, he cried, he allowed us to cry. It was so many things, I think that the guys really put him in in motion here, that that's gonna continue. Take on this path of, you know, equality and representation and equity.

### **Max Broussard**

And I think one of the biggest, you know, tools that the university is using, rightfully so has been the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and you know, just letting that grow and continue to grow without stopping. You know, I mean, Donny, you know, it to, like, whenever we first got here, oh, ma was a 30 by 20 room that had two offices and about a seating spaces. Yeah. Now he's taken over almost, you know, the whole second floor of the Student Center, and still growing, you know, we've gone from a director and one coordinator, to a director to coordinators, and a dean over the whole office, you know, and just with those resources, being able to sponsor more scholarships, being able to connect to more students have more programming, not just for African American students, but also for any minorities, underserved, you know, keeping that progress growing, being able to foster that is, you know, one of the ways that we can definitely grow and keep going, you know, making sure that people actually see it, because I know, I didn't see it when I came on a tour. But once I got here became my second home, you know, so it's some, it's a very important piece that, you know, we may know about a lot and talk about a lot, but a lot of people don't recognize its value. To my perspective.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah, I would definitely agree. Knowing the resources is very important, especially when you're on a campus, and you're an underrepresented student. Because you really don't realize how much X accessibility you have two different things. I know something, I tell we have, like an apprenticeship program with Black Student Union, it's something I tell the apprentices all the time is. Dean Vaughn was, I think, kind of telling them like to come connect with her. And she was like, you know, giving out her personal number. And I'm like, listen, and they're sitting there just looking and I'm like, pull out your phones, these are resources that you never know, like you will need later on. Like, you don't know, if you'll get in a bind, like financially, if she may be able to connect you with someone you don't know, if you may get in a bind academically, like you never realize the resource, you haven't to actually use them. And you know, it's the saying that we have, by community closed mouths don't get fed. So, you know, she can't help or you know, other people can't help if you don't ask for that help. And that's one of the first ways to know the resources that you have is by accident. So there's something I try to tell them all the time. Something I kind of thought about, as Donovan was talking was, how important since we are all like black student leaders on this campus. How important do we think representation is and how important how does that affect like our legacy once we leave here? Like what are we leaving, how we're leaving this campus once we leave to other like underrepresented students, not even just black students, but underrepresented, underrepresented students in general.

### **Max Broussard**

It's, you can't put it like even bar on the important. Um, you know, like Donnie was talking about the first and making sure you don't be the last seeing what those Trailblazers Trailblazers have done just, it opens that door, that possibility, you know, going into organizations, you know, I started out just joining primarily minority organizations. And then it wasn't till my junior year, I got into organizations like SGA, you know, and it was things like that, where I felt like I had to join organizations, I say, had to, but I feel like, you know, inject myself into those organizations, so that those freshmen coming behind me could be like, Oh, he's an SGA. I can be an SGA. You know, it's a it's almost like a mental click. Once you see somebody in a position, it's like, you can mentally put yourself there, then go for it. And then that's really how the progress keeps pushing. And so being able to see, you know, the first black students integrated tech, Bertha Bradford Robison, in James little pots now on, you know, freshmen suites

whenever the scientist gets changed, being able to see those accomplishments and then rewarded for their accomplishments is, you know, legacy in and of its own, but I feel like for us students today, our legacy just has to be continued. During the push in advance, the strides they made, you know, as being Ferguson, us continuing to do it continuing to push the envelope to open more doors and make it more comfortable for students to do what they're doing.

### **Donovan Turner**

The goal is always to leave campus better than how we found it. And, like Max, say, we are building in STEM really on the shoulders of everyone who came before us. And we are, you know, in the positions that we are in now, hopefully we are resource to other people so that we can be for those students that come after us we made we did not have, you know, coming in our sales. That's why I take my specific role and financial aid. So seriously, because I get to bridge that disconnect between black students, other students to colors and our office. Because we have, we really just have to be real in terms of communication, there is often a disconnect, especially when you're talking about across, you know, racial labs, or calls, cultural labs, things like that. So I think just, you know, being very intentional about your work here in the often Nestle word that, that a Miss D will use all the time, that's a word they thought t shirt will use all the time. Mr. Jimmy got to where he uses it now. Miss Potter uses it. But it's a true word. And I think I really didn't hear that word until like a couple of years ago and actually start using around me. But now that I know it, I can internalize. And I know what it means. And I know what it feels like to be intentional about the work that we do here. So with knowing all of our resources, I think a part of the legacy as a black student is being a resource to other black students who are coming after you. Because it's always going to be good just to ask for help or knowing that help is available. Should you need it?

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah, I think it's kind of crazy. Because you know how important representation is, you know, how important it is for students to come up after you. But it's not until you actually like hear students say things like that, and like talk about how appreciative they are that you realize, okay, like said, Sam, okay, this really is important. Because one of my opinion, one of the apprentices production union, she was actually one of my freshmen and her and I actually really didn't even I didn't think we really connected over the summer. But it's kind of funny, because when she got here, I was always the person she ran to for everything. And I found it really interesting. And so we were talking one day, and she was texting me. And I think I fell asleep. And I woke up the next morning from a text from her. And she was like, you know, I came to this school, like, thinking not she's not coming to school, praying that I would see someone black at orientation. And here I have a black orientation leader. And she was like, you just don't know, like, how important or how much that meant to me. And I say, wow, like this really is important. And I think as black student leaders, y'all can kind of talk on this too. There's kind of like a responsibility that we have to kind of get involved because you have people sometimes that complain about certain things that don't get changed. And it's like, what are you doing to take the initiative and I and I appreciate Donovan and Max, because I know I can say that these two, actually take time to get involved take time to try to bridge that gap and connect with students leave a legacy bigger than themselves. So that way, we can keep pushing the needle forward. Because I mean, even I sat in this room in September with a Dalton and Kiarra talking about how you know, we made history as being the first, the most diverse Orientation staff will this year they're making history again, with being the most

diverse staff so far, not even in just race, but I mean, backgrounds, just all across the board. We have so many like students this year, who are transfer students that orientation leaders coming from out of state we have the most out of state students I think we've had in a minute. And so just continually, continuously doing things to push that forward is just very important. And I'm excited to see what they do this summer. Because if I don't think I stated this, but I'll be working with them again this summer. With exec being a parent leader. So kind of bridging that gap with parents, making sure that they know their students are in good hands, that kind of thing. But I think it's very important. One thing I always tried to do, especially over the summer was make sure that parents and students, African American parents and students knew of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, letting them know the resources. We have scholarships going on. Hey, have you Has anybody talked to you about this? So that way, they don't feel left out and they know you know, their resources. They can, you know, tell their children Hey, Make sure you go fill out the scholarship because you, you never know, coming in for me, I got connected to the Office of Multicultural Affairs because of the issue because we had to do office hours I was an apprentice, my freshman year. And just some of the people I met, I would not have met if I wasn't in, often Multicultural Affairs, not even just faculty and staff, I mean, students, me and Max me because of autonomy. So as you never know, the connections that you will make and the resources that you will have. And I think that's a big component of retention and what we do here and how to retain black students. And OMA is a very big component of that. So I'm very appreciative that Dr. Gomez has expanded that. Because the truth is we need it not even just for black students, but all underrepresented students. So I'm very appreciative for him for that.

**Donovan Turner**

La'Dereka and I also met in OMA, she just said Max, but...

**La'Dereka Christian**

No, it's not even like that. Yeah, we met and I'm a bit like, we didn't really start talking until like, financial aid.

**Donovan Turner**

She's saying all of this during Black History Month.

**La'Dereka Christian**

Listen, listen, listen. My fault.

**Max Broussard**

No, but one thing he said, Well, La'Dereka, like going back to a point really both talking about resources, and us a student leaders. Like I'll never forget, you know, I think one of the biggest positives of being a student leader, knowing those resources is being able to help students, because a lot of times, you know, if they have an issue, they're not going to go hunt down in financial aid to go solve a five issue. They might just talk about it with us or with their friends. And just because like, oh, have you tried, like, calling is like nine go do that they don't want me to run around. And it's like, well, let me text Donovan, hey, you know, get this form on like, and being able to have those connections. I know, one story I'll never forget, I just got busy during a quarter. And I forgot to renew my housing lease. So I didn't have housing. Forget to have it going into the year, as I was talking to Mr. Jimmy about it. And he



was just like, Well, did you go talk to him? And I was like, I mean, I missed the deadline. So they're not really probably gonna help me. He was like, hold on, come back, get an email, pay your deposit your housing on? And I was like, What did you do, he was like, I know people. And so it's not even it's, it's really just not having those connections is being able to help fill those gaps, and being able to talk to at least one person. And they'll be able to help you out wherever you got to go. And I feel like that's the, the will, the need for more, you know, the continuation of getting more minority students involved. Because, you know, having more involved means that those resources to other students that feel like they can't do it, or they don't have that access is important. And also just being able to talk to, you know, alumni, you know, I'm a member of student Advancement team, which handles working with alumni. And so being able to do that, being able to speak to alumni that come back to campus, talk about the changes and being like, well, we didn't have that 20 years ago. It's like what we do now. So it's like, you know, these are the changes that are happening, these are what's been better since you've been back. And that instantly changes their perspective on what's going on. And now the one to pour in more, you know, working with organizations to do mentoring, to give talks about industry or possible opportunities, and working all that just continuing to better the experience of minority students.

I think, um, while we're here, and we all pretty much touched on, you know, different members of faculty and staff. For blackish, let's highlight them, because Miss D, Mr. Jimmy, Coach Vaughn, when he was here, have all poured into us, you know, amongst other other other members of faculty and staff of our poured into us. So, I guess what do you appreciate most, as a student of color black students, specifically, having, you know, faculty staff, who are who looked like you trying to help and inspiring

### **La'Dereka Christian**

I think for me, being a black woman, this was, I know, forget Ashlynn Taylor, may are having a conversation one day, and we had just left out of SGA meeting, pretty heated about some stuff. And she said, you know, they're not checking for you. And I kind of looked at her and I was like, Wait, and I had to kind of let it sit for a second but it's kind of one of those things where it's like, they're not really checking for black students. They're not check in for anybody there on behalf of like, underrepresented student They may be now starting to pay attention more, but the truth matters. In certain situations, the first their first thought is not. Well, how will this affect underrepresented students? And so, for me, I think Ms. D is kind of funny, because they all kind of serve me in different ways, because Mr. Jimmy kinda has this thing of like, always shifting my perspective from like, negativity to positivity. So like, he's very optimistic. So he'll, he has opportunity, like, if I go to his office to sit down and talk to him about something, he'll change my perspective, it's like, well, you know, at least this happened, or like, look at the positive side of this kind of thing. And then Miss D, she will call me out period, point blank, she, and when I meet what I say, she, she will call me out. Um, and I'm sure they can attest to it as well. And she has no problems like, calling you out, but it's a way to challenge you. I remember my freshman year, the first thing she called me out on, I left out of a TLC meeting, I was part of TLC, my freshman year. And there was a comment made that I didn't appreciate, I felt like it was kind of like a microaggression. But I didn't say anything. And the other black students in the room kind of felt it. And we were all kind of upset. And I get to the BSU meeting that night, and go up to ms. D, and I'm thinking, you know, I'm gonna talk to her about it, you know, just kind of in passing, you know, and talking to her about I'm like, Yeah, Ms. D, they did this, blah, blah, blah. And she's like, she looked at me, she stand there. She

listens. She looks at me, she goes. So what did you say? And I say, I didn't say anything. And she said, so why are you bringing it to me if you just say anything? And I just kind of sat there. And I remember them being other people around. I was like, Oh, she just embarrassed me in front of these people. But the truth of the matter is, it was she was right. I mean, why would I bring something to you a problem for you to maybe bring up to somebody else when I didn't even say anything in the moment? You know, I didn't correct them. I didn't say they were wrong. And so it's kind of one of those things she was like, so why are you bringing it to me, you should have said something in a moment, if that's how you feel. And ever since then, she just she kind of challenges me. And I think as a black woman, it's very important for me to see another black woman of her caliber, you know, her position. And just seeing everything that she does on a day to day basis is like very important. I love going to her office and having conversations with her now. But she will challenge me and she will call me out so

### **Max Broussard**

Oh, I would say for me, you know, there hasn't just been one. Um, I can tell you from academic and a professional side, Dr. McGough gates in coccus. You know, he, he was our Nesby advisor for the National Society of Black Engineers for our chapter. And just being able to see him being you know, a program chair in coccus. You know, seeing what he does, on a daily basis and watching him navigate and wanting to be like that, and being comfortable being who I am. In my profession was something I needed to see for sure. You know, Mr. Jimmy, like we've talked about, you know, he, he changed, you know, gave me another perspective was a true mentor still is to this day for me. And, you know, like, Derek was talking about changing that perspective. Remember, the countless times I go into his office complaining about you know, I gotta test this, we got a paper due on what I'm gonna do. And he just hits you with the world McDonald's is iron. And like, it makes you just take a step back. And just remember why you really like he just blatantly and it just makes you take a step back and be like, Yeah, I'm here. So I don't have to apply to McDonald's. Like I'm here to get a job I'm on a path. And I'm gonna get through it you know, working closely more like with Dean's be in hearing from his perspective, more. So, you know, recruiting wise has changed my perspective and how have talked to parents on tours, you know, with Colas ambassador and given tours of College of Engineering, a science scene, everything he's been through. And then most recently, Dr. Wood, just seeing how he's able to not only be that letting director, but still take time to engage with students. All four of those guys like really have made me have a different perspective of what it means like not only to be, you know, a black man quote, unquote, but being able to own my authentic self and relate that to my profession and how to impact others with it. So just having them as you know, mentors and people to look up to changes how I maneuver with other students as well.

### **Donovan Turner**

And I agree with everything, everything both y'all say actually. Because I know just we really don't give a lot of, or enough credit to black faculty and staff for just how especially now being faculty staff, I see how hard that is. Um, but yes, Dean Love-Vaughn, Coach Vaughn when he was here. I just saw that T shirt the other day, and she's very good. Very good at her job. Oh, Mr. Jamie, Mr. Collins. So, so many people who have poured into us, and now being a member of I guess that that group is important for me now to pay that forward. Because even now, I'll have students that maybe I helped last summer, that I probably don't even know the name, I'll remember the names, you know, but they might remember me or they dropped by the office say, hey, Donny, Mr. Danny, thank you for helping me out.



You know, thanks for getting me back in school things like the family. I had a I had, mom sent me a Christmas card. It was nice. So I think now I know the importance even even though it's always important to see people who look like you, um, it just makes you care that much more. But now, knowing the importance and misery also had this one saying, and I'm so sorry, to relive this whole conversation with her quotes. She says always, To whom much is given, much is expected much is required deities. And so I ruined she told me she sat me down hand me a heart to heart with her one day, she had to give me together real real good. And that was that one, she stuck on me. And it definitely still. And I definitely take it to heart.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah, um, something else I kind of forgot to mention too, because I don't think people realize how important it is, especially within your college as well. I know like College of Business. I remember, like my sophomore year, maybe coming in and being like, you know, we look at the boards, look, the walls, look at these faculty and stuff. I'm like, we need more representation in here something you know. And so one of the things I'm like, made sure that I did was try to like get connected within my college. And one thing I was very, very appreciative of was last year, Dr. Cunningham, was kind of appointed as an executive in residence in the College of Business. And he, again, shout out to miss Jimmy, because I would not have been connected with the Cunningham if it was not for Mr. Jimmy. I was in his office one day. And Mr. Jimmy goes, you need to go talk to Dr. Cunningham, we somehow got on topic about college of business or something. And he kept telling me, you know, you need because I think I was saying how I needed help, like with money for school and stuff. And he said, You need to go talk to Cunningham College of Business. And I was like, Okay. And I kind of sat on that for a while. And finally I said, you know, let me go over here and talk to this, you know, introduce myself, talk to him. And I went over there, introduce myself, start talking to him. Next thing, you know, he's reaching out to me to help get started the first Louisiana Tech chapter of the National Association of Black accountants. So we were working on that. But not only that, because I got connected to him. He took the initiative and saw what I was doing and went ahead and him his wife actually sponsored scholarship for me now. And so it's just stuff like that, that you really don't even realize you need to take advantage of Mr. Jimmy has some of the craziest connections that you would never even know or think of until you sit down and talk to him. And there's but he's probably one of the most plugged in, like faculty. I know, he is. And not even just like on campus, I mean, like, throughout worst period. And so he can definitely get you plugged in, I call him connect for because he makes connections, he knows people

### **Donovan Turner**

because Why do you know all these people? Why do you need to know all of these people? But yeah, so how hard is it for you all and being leaders? Like how are they just being a black leader on campus?

### **Max Broussard**

Is a is a challenge every day? Um, because it's the you know, the, the weight of the responsibility of knowing like, sometimes you got to answer a question like you get into, you're going to a space like this where, you know, your experience is magnified to you know, the whole 11% of the student population that defines themselves as, you know, African American, your experiences where people are going to count as the majority of other people's experience, your actions may define, you know, four or five years of people who come back in your role. It definitely weighs on you for sure, you know. And I felt

that, but at the same time as it, you know, maybe a weight, but it's also a badge of honor, because now, I know like, if I do this, right, it opens the door. And it's the progress ankle stop. And so it's something where it's a, it's always like it's motivation to keep you doing the right thing China always move on. And, you know, China always press press the issue forward.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah, I would say kind of piggybacking off of that, as leaders, you already held to a higher standard. But I think as black leaders will, will to like two times that standard, because I think there's such a Elton title that talks about this a lot when you're put in a fishbowl. And it's kind of like, people come up to the fishbowl. They tap on it, you know, they miss what he tried to get to get a reaction out of you. And I think, as black leaders, that's what that's what we're putting in is a fishbowl. And so sometimes you have people that have come up to tap the fishbowl aggravate the fish, you know, in a bowl. And so it's very important about how we handle things, what we say what we do, because we already have a magnifying glass on us. And so I always try to be very cognizant about how I handle situations, and what I say in response to certain things. Because some people say things or do things to get a reaction out of you. And if you respond in a way that they don't expect you to respond, then you really have the power of the situation when they thought they had a power situation. And so I think really just reminding yourself of why you're, you're here. And that's something I try to remind myself all the time that something I try to tell my eboard all the time is why are you here? What is your what is your why? Because whenever you feel like giving up whenever you you know, you get tired, whenever you get tired of being the only in the room, or whenever you get tired of constantly doing stuff. And it seems like it's not getting noticed, because you're a black student leader. It's kind of one of those things where it's like, why Remember why you're here because at the end of the day, your y will always be the reason that a push you and propel you forward and keep you pushing. So

### **Donovan Turner**

and really just as a student in general, my biggest thing, not big thing, alright, probably not too extreme. But one of my big things where it was, like the whole code switching thing. And learning how to speak in spaces that don't contain a lot of people that look like me. And how hard that is, I don't think a lot of people understand how hard AV or African American Vernacular English, how hard that is to kind of break if that's your is your first dialect of English. And it was almost like learning a whole new language, for the most part, especially in working in financial aid. No talking on the phone all the time trying to you know, building bridges with other organizations on campus. leadership as a leader in my own organizations, it was so hard. It was so hard and I don't I don't think that he gets enough light. In even now, on this podcast, I'm stuttering because I'm like, trying to find is it half? Or is it had? You know, things like this? Am I conjugating the right words. Um, whereas if I was just speaking freely, I probably wouldn't be, you know, stuttering this hard. So that's another aspect of leadership and just being a black student here at a PWI maybe in any other PWI any other predominantly white space. That's mess. That's definitely a challenge for me even to this day.

### **La'Dereka Christian**

Yeah. And it's funny because I got a new perspective kind of on code switching, because I think when we are close, which we automatically think just dialect or speech or dialogue, but it really goes around to all things like attire hair, like, I mean, the I think one presentation, I'm not sure who it was. But um,

recently, there was like a research presentation that was in a U haul lobby, a couple of days ago. And somebody basically did a presentation on the crown act, talking about how, basically emphasizing how black women were not allowed to basically like where their efforts were the natural hair. And when I was at the conference, this past weekend, I went to a workshop that talked about code switching, and they were talking about like code switching attire in here and I said, you know, I've never thought about it like that. But when you think about it, when you're certain settings, you as a black woman, you think or I think sometimes you have to slip I've had to slip my hair back, or I have to wear my hair certain way or I have to put a wig on because I can't wear my natural hair. You know, you you're a lot more self conscious about things that should just that shouldn't have to be self conscious about, you know. And so I think it does add to the professionalism aspect, but I think in some ways, it kind of down, you know, dials down on who we are as people as well.

**Max Broussard**

Thank you today for joining us on our Black History Month edition of the br At 94 podcasts in signing out today is max Broussard,

**Donovan Turner**

Donovan Turner

**La'Dereka Christian**

and La'Dereka Christian,

**Max Broussard**

thank you and have a great day.

**Gavin Kelly**

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