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Malcolm Smith
University of Maine

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African-American group strives for unity

By Malcolm Smith
Staff Writer

The word "unity" may be heard much more often by the African-American community on the University of Maine campus this year. Unity is the key to overcoming many of the problems faced by the African-American Student Association, according to Lamont Moye, second year liberal studies major and newly elected co-chair of the group.

Of the estimated 96 African-American students on campus, the AASA's weekly meetings receive an attendance of only 10 to 15 people according to Moye, who feels that the group's past disorganization is part of the reason why. "That really discouraged a lot of people," Moye said.

Moye also cited the "discouraging" feeling of invisibility felt by many African-Americans on campus, because of their small population, as a reason for low participation.

Work is underway to address these problems. Steps to better organize the group have included the drawing up of a constitution, a platform, and a move to improve meeting attendance.

Moye and his co-chair, second-year biology/pre-med student Ricardo Tubbs, emphasize communication as a way to build Association unity. Tubbs, in an attempt to communicate one-on-one with other African-American students, calls many of them personally, a practice followed by other AASA officers.

Moye, in an attempt to get other African-Americans interested in the group, wants to put up flyers to get the word out about the different activities that the group would like to sponsor, including tours of out-of-state college campuses.

"We've got to get our students back involved," Moye said, "We've got to be heard."

Several goals are being considered by the AASA, including a resource room that highlights African-American and other minority contributions to society through minority books, films and catalogs. According to Moye, this room would primarily serve to educate the non-minority students.

Tubbs said he would like to see the AASA sponsor some type of campus-wide formal dance. "We can get the whole school involved," he said. Tubbs added that he would like to see the school observe Martin Luther



The new officers of the UMaine African-American Student Association talk with their advisor about several business items. L-R Alicia Hill, Lamont Moye, Ricardo Tubbs, James Varner, Chris Bragdon. (Wickenheiser photo.)

King Day.

Alicia Hill, first-year liberal studies student and newly elected administrative assistant for the AASA, added that she would like to see more representation of African-American women on the campus, both in student and faculty roles.

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. on Sundays in the Bangor Lounge at the Memorial Union.

Moye feels that meeting attendance will increase as news of the positive changes being made gets out.

"We just want to let people know that we're here on campus," Moye said.