

Excited students crowd different parts of campus from Talley to Harris Field to Witherspoon throughout the week to participate in the Pan-Afrikan Week experience. This week-long event is held annually by the University Activities Board's Black Students Board in an effort to celebrate Black excellence and culture. From April 4-10, this effort was achieved through a variety of engaging events.

"As a young Black woman, the Pan-Afrikan week celebration was so important because it provided me and other Black students with a sense of belonging, support and appreciation through uplifting our culture and identity. Sometimes it's hard to see this encouragement and feel this sense of community on a daily basis as we are a part of a predominantly white institution. However, I think Pan-Af week allowed the chance for me and my fellow Black peers to feel proud about our blackness, and for our non-black peers to see and appreciate our culture as well," Shayla Houston, a freshman in biological sciences, said.

“IT ALSO TAUGHT ME THAT I SHOULD ALWAYS BE PROUD OF MY IDENTITY AS A YOUNG BLACK WOMAN.”
- SHAYLA HOUSTON

Each day of the week, a different event is held, starting with the "Say it Loud Kickoff" at noon in the Talley Lobby during which students can add their identities to the chalkboard and make their own button pins.

The celebration continued on Tuesday with a poetry jam and journal giveaway. This was followed by Wednesday's globe-making activity in which students get the materials to make a globe of "fun colors and small trinkets that represent blackness" and Thursday's "#TBT Happy Hour" where there will be more giveaways and students can get their shirts, stoles, pins and more. On Friday, April 8, there is a spin-the-wheel activity and the BlackXperience Festival featuring food trucks, vendors, activities and a live DJ on Saturday. Last but not least, on April 10, to bring the week to a close, students enjoyed a "Shades of Melanin Brunch" at the State Ballroom.

"It's important for students to celebrate their culture and backgrounds. It had a sense of students feeling happy they had something held to celebrate their identities...I went to the Shades of Melanin brunch. It was the only event I could attend because

of my class and work schedule. I like it because of the unique theme where everyone wore shades of brown. I also appreciated the conversations being held there," Rachel Cherry, a junior in communication, said.

Pan-Afrikan Week appeared to have a much higher turnout than in previous years due to the pandemic. The energy and excitement about the events improved significantly and there was not nearly as strict of a limit on the amount of people who could attend events in person.

"Experiencing Pan-Af week prompted me to realize how important it is to have a good community and support system around you that values and respects you for just being you. It also taught me that I should always be proud of my identity as a young black woman, and always celebrate myself, especially my culture, and my differences from others instead of stifling what makes me, me," Houston said. ◉



Models showcase the work of designers **Destiny Hill** and **Sydni Mottley** at the 24th Annual Fashion Exposé event for Pan-Afrikan Week in Talley Student Union April 7. Hill and Sydni won the intermediate category with their collection, "Olympia's Closet".

PHOTO BY: JERMAINE HUDSON



▲ Ronnie Jordan, a stand-up comedian from Atlanta, performs during the Black Out Loud Comedy Show of Pan-Afrikan Week in Talley Student Center April 6.

PHOTO BY: KODJO TANOU



► Alvin Mutongi, a senior in civil engineering and other members of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity stroll at the Pan-Afrikan Stroll-Off in Talley Student Union April 8. Pan-Afrikan Week was the annual week-long celebration of diversity and Black culture at NC State.

PHOTO BY: EMILY PEEDIN



Members of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity at NC State perform a dance routine during the first-round of the Pan-Afrikan Stroll-Off in Talley Student Union April 8. The Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity won in their category.

PHOTO BY: EMILY PEEDIN



4/4
Talley Party Kick-Off

The first event was a silent headphone party with three different DJs. DJ Zulu, DJ Trelz, and DJ Double A performed at the kickoff.

4/5
Soul and Salsa Zumba

The second event was a zumba class themed around soul and salsa music. Jordan Farrell was the instructor for the class.

4/6
Black Out Loud Comedy Show

The comedy show was the third event of the week and was hosted by comedian B Daht with Ronnie Jordan and Chinedu Unaka accompanying him.

4/7
24th Annual Fashion Exposé

The fourth event was a fashion expose hosted by the African American Textile Society. Students from NC state and nearby colleges showcased their work.

4/8
NPHC Stroll Off

The fifth event was organized by NC State's National Panhellenic Council. The Stroll-Off consisted of multiple rounds of NPHC greek organizations competing for a trophy.

4/9
BlackXperience Festival

The sixth event was a festival organized by Black Students Board. The festival included a mechanical bull, rock climbing wall, trampolines, food trucks, and more.

4/10
Shades of Melanin Brunch

The week ended with a brunch themed around shades of melanin attire. Organizations like Code Red and Unhinged Praise Gospel Choir performed at the brunch.