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Script for Award Recipients at the Black Student Union 50th Anniversary Gala

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Opening

We're so happy to have everyone here tonight. It is important that we are able to spend this time together as a community, to acknowledge, inspire and fellowship with one another. I wouldn't be in my position today if it hadn't been for several people sitting in this room who have in some way touched my life. I learned quickly upon coming to USF that the Black community was small, but that it was spilling over with passion, ambition and movement for social justice, equity, and progress. Our passion manifests itself in many ways and people and tonight, we hope to shine the light on a few of those folks who have been doing their part to make USF and the world, a better place for Black people.

Lena and Alexis

This award of appreciation is presented to two students who sprang into leadership in order to create an environment for Black queer students on campus. A year ago Taylor and I talked about the possibility of a black queer community space but weren't entirely sure how it would manifest, and more importantly who it would manifest through. At the time, Alexis Banks and Lena Harris were helping my sister to create a play surrounding Black identity, and soon I became very close with them. When I asked if they would take on the design and facilitation of Black Rainbow Party, I was elated at not only their willingness but the passion with which they adopted and grew the concept. I am proud to say that from the moment they took on their roles as co-presidents, they have planned and executed every piece of what we see today, from the posters to the topics and all the way through the meetings. While they may not have originally seen themselves stepping into this role, they have not only taken it they have grown and blossomed into very capable black leaders and pillars in their community here at USF. Lena and Alexis would you please come to the stage.

ASA Executive Board

In 2018 USF reported that it had enrolled 1600 international students, of those 1600 student they had enrolled just under 30 African students from 12 countries. As for students who identified as African that were born here in America, those numbers weren't reported. Last year, the African Student Association, was in limbo as there was a struggle to find executive board members to continue the work. While ASA is a graduate organization, it has always been open to undergraduates, and some members weren't willing to let the space fade away.

Understanding the importance of maintaining the presence and physical space of the USF African community, Mutale Mulenga, an undergraduate student, decided to go a step further to protect African visibility on campus. She sought an executive board her fellow undergraduate community answered. They have hosted socials, facilitated educational and thought-provoking panels, brought amazing African food to campus, and most importantly, answered the call to leadership to make sure that our spaces remain and that they are run by us and for us. Because of this incredible work I would like to thank and appreciate the African Student Association: President- Mutale Mulenga, Vice President- Iman Yousef, Events Coordinator- Yaqub Elmi,

Community Liason, and Media Officer- Angele Griffin, Director of Publicity- Isatou Marenah, and Director of Finance- Ornell Faitquoi. Mutale would you please come up and accept this award.

BASE Advisory Board

Yall ever heard of thing called BASE? Well for those of you aren't aware already, the Black Academic Sucess and Engagement program functions to provide pointed and intentional resources, classes, space, scholarships, and opportunities for Black students here at USF. This program is as wide as it is tall and takes more than a few hands and skills to bring together. Along with the ~~structure~~ provided but the larger USF community and student body, the BASE program is run by a collection of devoted individuals that make up the BASE Advisory Board. These individuals include:

While we have had many celebrations of BASE in this integral launch year, we as the BSU would like to warmly thank the BASE Advisory Board for all the ork that they do to create a greater college experience for Black students at USF. If Board Chair Preston Walton could come to the stage to accept this award.

Black Business Association

In a city booming with industry, knowledge and opportunity, it can often be difficult for students of color to navigate it alone. In 2018, the Black Business Association was launchd in order to be a business and professional resource to Black students. They have worked to bring various career networking and development events and even were able to coordinate with the Career Center to take over 20 students to Coupa tech company to learn about internships, working in tech and preaparing resumes. The Black Business Association was founded and is led by

The passing on of information and opportunity is crucial in our community, and we as the BSU would like to thank you for the work that you have done and have set out to do in the future, Milka if you could come up and accept this award.

Professor Sears

This next award goes to a professor who's warm spirit has touched many people here at USF and serves in a variety of ways. She is such a role model and exemplifies everything I aspire to be; a strong, intelligent, compassionate, ambitious, loving, kind, unapologetic Black woman. With such an inspiring, warm soul who is always going out of her way for everyone, she has continued to encourage and inspire many students way past their years here at University of San Francisco. With one example of her dedication to social justice coming to life, these visions

prosper through being the director of Ester Madriz Diversity Scholars Living Learning community. She has created a space for the obtainment of knowledge and activism in order to reveal societal issues and the perpetuation of systematic structures. Personally, she has opened the doors to my social and political consciousness and has continued to foster my ability to move in this world with compassion and advocacy for all with grace, changing my life. From myself and all other lives that you have touched, thank you so much for all of your dedication and hard work (hard work being an understatement for all that you do). Always thankful for your social justice warrior heart and your love for Rakim, Erykah Badu, and Mother Lauryn Hill. If you, Professor Sears, can please come to accept this award.

Professor Sonja Martin Poole