Meet Our Carolina United Co-Directors

We sat down with Carolina United Co-Directors, Brian Fields and Destiny Guzman to get to know a little bit more about them and their goals for uniting the Carolina community. Learn more about Carolina United [here](https://carolinaunion.unc.edu)!

**Tell us about what you do as Co-Directors**

**B:** As Co-director, I want to help facilitate important discussions on diversity and inclusion on campus and work to capitalize on UNC’s diversity to make the school a better place.

**D:** As Co-director for me this is a fresh experience, I am not a Carolina United vet, so I bring in a fresh set of eyes. I’m very interested in intersectionality and all the facets of our identity so creating a platform for people to feel comfortable exploring who they are, and where they come from, and not just that, but using these things as a lens to perceive the world and also how you utilize those things to make a presence on campus or in your professional career.

**Can you explain what that intersectionality means?**

**D:** I’m really good with examples so I’ll use one here. For me, I am a black person, I am a Hispanic person, I’m a woman, I’m straight, I’m from New York City and also lived in Charlotte so I have an Urban and Southern perspective, my parents are high school educated. How do all those sorts of things coincide and interact to create who I am, so not just looking at me like a woman or as a black person but taking into account all the different facets that make us individuals and who we are. That’s the way I look at intersectionality.

**Brian, having previous experience with Carolina United, can you tell us more about your experiences so far?**

**B:** My Freshman year at Carolina I was given the opportunity to apply to be a part of Carolina United. Following the summer of sophomore year, I applied and that was one of the best decisions I’ve made at Carolina. I was a participant that year and it really allowed me to explore my own identity and also hear so many different perspectives that
I've never heard about. Learning about people's ability status, documentation status, and class status, things that I had never given enough attention to really opened my eyes and allowed me to recognize and appreciate the diversity at UNC... I think as Co-Director now it's really going to be a test of Destiny and I's ability to really teach others how to facilitate those conversations and I think that educating others on diversity training is a really important tool in 21st Century America.

**What are some of the most memorable experiences you've had with Carolina United?**

**B:** Every year we do our retreat which is the focus of Carolina United. This is where between 65 and 80 participants along with 20 counselors go to a location in North Carolina that is relatively disconnected and we have these important discussions and learn about topics that concern intersectionality, activism, and meaningful allyship. Through dialogue with each other we are able to learn more about these topics and bring them back to campus.

**D:** What makes me feel special is the sense of family that it brings and how we learn to accept and react to different viewpoints. I just think that is such a beautiful part of the experience and I think that it goes far beyond the retreat, so I'm really looking forward to all of that in Carolina United.

**B:** Yes! The main thing is that you go to camp with 70 strangers and then you come back as family and stay in touch... and it also creates more opportunities to get immersed with other organizations that you wouldn't traditionally get involved with, because there is such a diversity of applicants that you are exposed to so many new organizations and fresh ways to better Carolina.

**D:** It definitely cracks open the campus for you.

**Any closing thoughts?**

**B:** I just want to say that I feel really lucky to be part of such an organization with such a great program that is integral to celebrating the diversity and inclusiveness that is part of the Carolina way and I'm really grateful to our wonderful staff Tate and Ebony and all the past people who have helped to bring this program to life.

**Thank you Brian and Destiny!**