Kappa’s Davis Makes Impact on Greek Leadership Council

As a student board member of the Southeastern Greek Leadership Council for the 2020-21 academic year, UNC junior Derrick Davis is focused on ensuring that the SGLC’s annual conference provides a forum for issues that are important to Black campus leaders.

“With everything that has happened over the summer and this year, I brought up topics that I feel like should be addressed,” Davis said, referring to the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for more attention on institutional racism in the United States. “That means getting speakers that touch on how we can serve as leaders while addressing racism.”

Davis, who is a president of the Theta Omicron Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., attended the SGLC conference last year, and while there saw opportunities to improve the experience for students of color, including members of National Pan-Hellenic Council and Multicultural Greek Council organizations. For example, there was a lack of vendors selling apparel with the letters of organizations from those two councils.

“I was looking forward to buying something,” Davis said. “But there really wasn’t any opportunity, so I was bummed by that. I think it would be a good opportunity for us and for the vendor to make money.”

Davis’ passion for issues of justice and equity is rooted in the support of his family and the experiences of attending a mostly white high school in Tacoma, Washington.

“Growing up, I was very fortunate to have a strong village,” Davis said. “That helped me become who I am today. I always wanted to give back and help others in the Black community do well since we are so marginalized.”

Davis, a Hispanic Linguistics major with minors in Military Leadership and African Diaspora Studies, is deeply involved in student and community life at UNC. He co-chaired the Black Men United Committee of the Black Student Movement, volunteered with the Communiuniversity Youth Program, served on the Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Outreach Committee of Student Government, and assisted with UNC Special Olympics programs. All of this is in addition to serving as a Resident Advisor in Ram Village and being a UNC Army ROTC cadet.

Davis, who uses a color-coded Google calendar stay on schedule, said that at times
he had struggled to keep pace with his many commitments, but his energy remains high because he feels strongly about his work and his ability to improve life at Carolina.

"Since we are at a predominantly white institution, just the lack of diversity and inclusion makes me want to improve campus and make it a better space for Black students because there are times that I have not felt comfortable or have experienced implicit biases," Davis said. "So I just want to do my part and fix things to help UNC be a better place."

He is also inspired by the motto of his fraternity, which is "achievement in every field of human endeavor."

"Everyone is like-minded and working toward the same goals of achievement," Davis said as he talked about the connection he felt to his own fraternity chapter as well as the national organization. "Whether that be in service or professional life, our brothers really live up to that no matter where you go."

It's a commitment that Davis will bring to ensuring that the 2021 SGLC conference is inclusive and relevant to the issues that matter most to Black students.

"The main thing is bringing perspective," Davis said. "I want to make sure that perspective is there, and that we are represented and keeping everyone's best interests in mind."