



Students mingle on the Quad.

“BSA is the reason I walk around and see smiling faces on campus.”



Students having fun at UMOJA.

Diversity and Inclusion on Loyola’s Campus

By Makayla Smith

Out of the many stressful things I have faced in my life, picking a college is on the top of my list. Not only are you picking the place educating you about a future career, but you are also picking a home for the next four years. College alone is a huge change that could alter your life, but picking the wrong college might be the end of your life. Yes, that is an exaggeration. And maybe it isn’t a big deal if you pick the wrong school the first time around. But I know I was a rubber band ball of anxiety when I first arrived on Loyola’s campus. Not only was I afraid of standing out, I was afraid of standing alone. Being a black student on a predominately white campus could seem like a lonely choice, but I think it is the best choice I have made. This school feels like home due to Loyola’s many opportunities on campus that help include students of color in their community.

One of the first opportunities that I was made aware of is a program called MAP. This program provided by [ALANA](#) allows for students to move on campus a week early, meet other students of color, and build a sense of comfort on campus. Although I was unable to attend, I have seen the benefits of this program first hand. My direct roommate, Ayomide Adelaja, is a data science major and a freshman here at Loyola University. She participated in MAP and reaped the benefits. I see how happy she is with the friends she met during this program, and can only imagine how many people feel the exact same way that she does. This program that takes place before the academic year begins is a true representation of how inclusive Loyola is.

The idea of moving to a new place, and no longer being in your comfort zone can be scary. If you are antisocial like me, it may feel like staring at the tallest roller coaster in an amusement park. When you look around and see that most students don’t look like you, it may be even harder to find a place where you fit in. The Activities/Club Fair at Loyola, which takes place in the first few weeks of school, is also a great way to find clubs to join here at Loyola. Associations like [BSA](#) and [ASA](#) are great groups to be a part of when trying to meet people on campus. These organizations not only give you a community but they plan events that allow you to meet people of different backgrounds with similar interests.

Events on campus are some of the best places to meet new people, and even find a new hobby. Two of the most popular events on campus are the Loyola Dance Company Showcase and the [Black Student Association Fashion Show](#). I am a member of the Dance Company, and this also happens to be the source of the friendships I have created here on campus. The Loyola Dance Company accepts every student, and places you in classes of difficulty. This inclusivity of students with different skill levels allowed me to meet people of all identities, and helped me create bonds that will last a lifetime. These clubs can help you bond with people of all backgrounds. The Black Student Association Fashion show is inclusive of people of all genders and races. This show is also a great way to connect to people on campus with a similar interest FASHION. What's better than friends? Friends in cute outfits.

When I was entering college, my mom told me to show myself as friendly in order to make friends. Making friends on this campus has been easier than I could have imagined. I also got lucky in picking a good roommate. Your dorm room is a place where you should feel comfortable and at home. It is a place to sit back, eat chips, watch *Love is Blind*, and leave drama at the door. In order to achieve this heaven-like experience you need to pick a good roommate. Not only does Loyola provide a roommate quiz, so you can find a match, but they also have [intentional living communities](#), such as the Black and Grey living community, that allow you to live with people who come from similar backgrounds. Not only is this living community a sign of growth and inclusivity on this campus, but it also shows the level of support you receive here at Loyola.

When considering a college, your level of comfortability should be at the top of your checklist. As a black woman, it is easy to feel out of place and alone, but here at Loyola I have never felt more at home.



Loyola Dance Company 2023 Fall Showcase

***“What’s
better than
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Friends in
cute clothes.”***



Loyola Dance Company 2023 small group performance.

