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WKU kicks off Black History Month events

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com

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From a performance by a Grammy-winning vocalist, to a unity rally and march, this year's calendar of Black History Month events at Western Kentucky University is kicking off with greater magnitude than ever before, organizers said.

"We really want our students to have an opportunity to celebrate their blackness on the Hill," said Kristina Gamble, who coordinates WKU's Intercultural Student Engagement Center.

The center is leading this year's events in partnership with more than 10 campus and community organizations. This year's events have been pulled together by a special university task force.

Lamario Moore, a graduate assistant with the Intercultural Student Engagement Center, said the task force recruited representatives from black student organizations across campus, WKU's African American Studies program, the local NAACP chapter, African American alumni and local churches.

Moore said this year's theme, "My Black Is ...," embodies the full depth of what it means to be black and that a person's blackness can be powerful, timeless and beautiful. The theme offers a chance for black expression on campus, while reinforcing that "We're here to stay," Moore said.

Black History Month celebrations kicked off on the Hill last week, with an opening celebration Thursday featuring performances from the KAIOS student dance team, WKU's Major Redz and the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

A Keynote Celebration featuring Grammy-award winning artist Le'Andria Johnson is taking place at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Van Meter Hall. Tickets are free to WKU students and faculty, but community members need to purchase tickets for \$10. They can do so between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Intercultural Student Engagement Center in the Downing Student Union, room 2041.

Other events include a Young, Gifted and Black student mixer at 7 p.m. Feb. 21 at DSU Niteclass, an African-American Male Networking Luncheon on Feb. 25 and a Unity Rally and March at 7 p.m. Feb. 26, also at DSU Niteclass.

In planning the events, Gamble said organizers wanted to “create events that would be appealing to the campus community but also ... to the greater Bowling Green community.”

The full calendar of events can be found online at wku.edu/isec/blackhistorymonth.

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Aaron Mudd

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