Black studies and African-American studies programs are now a common fixture in colleges and universities. But what do they mean? Do they emphasize different names, such as Africa-American or African? What are these programs about? What are they teaching? Who are the students? Here we explore these questions.

I think that we are trying to do the underpinning of black studies, to not just study the history of African or African Americans in the United States, but to look at a slightly broader spectrum," said Prince Wells, associate professor of the department of music and director of the black studies program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. "We have to make widespread support for black studies at SIUE.

While the program is called black studies, Weissinger said, "We are talking about a different names. What does this imply? Do they emphasize different names, such as Africa-American or African? What are these programs about? What are they teaching? Who are the students? Here we explore these questions."

Professor Prince Wells, left, and Dr. Sandra Weissinger, center, being interviewed by Aldemoro Romero Jr.

"American history, but we have excluded it or not spoken to it as much as it is needed." Wells said that he thinks that scholars, regardless of race, need much more open to looking at the African-American experience than they were in the past. And gives all the different academic disciplines that intersect with black studies to be as broad as possible. He would be interested in how jazz and other musical forms were part of the movements and if they were a movement in themselves. "A common misconception outside the nation or that what is transpiring is that these programs are only for black students. This is not the case." Wells explained.

"I think it is the lack of education and that things are different here on campus compared to the rest of the country that they would not readily see the problem with people that are talking about," Wells has also added.

"I think the main reason towards this thing is that campus really reflect the attitude of everyone in the nation. We would be more open to that," Wells said. "We should see the problems that we have with teachers who teach black studies, women studies and African American studies, but that is not what is really at stake here on campus. We are in a position to ask people and in a position to come in and participate in the social issues or resiliencies of today."

Weissinger said that the social issues or resiliencies of today. "We have an advisory committee that is very responsive and welcoming to SIUE. But what exactly do these different names mean? Do they emphasize different names, such as Africa-American or African? What are these programs about? What are they teaching? Who are the students? Here we explore these questions."