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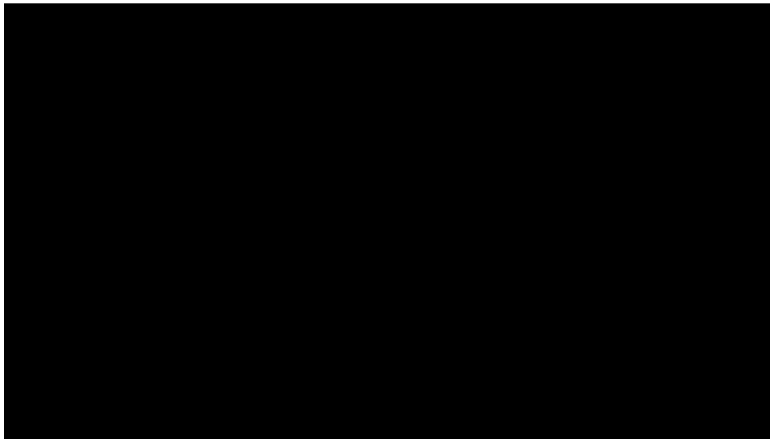


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ASU student body hold silent protest over new mission statement

BY TOSIN FAKILE | FRIDAY, MARCH 11TH 2016



Albany State University student body are upset and held a silent protest on Friday because the term Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) was not included in the new mission statement. /Tosin Fakile



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Update: 10:45 P.M. 03/11/16



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At about 4 p.m. today, ASU president Dr. Art Dunning met with students to try to answer the questions they had. Even alumni came to voice their concern.

"We're more concerned about the culture and the heritage and where that goes if we don't put it in the mission statement," one alumnus spoke out saying when Dr. Dunning started taking questions from students.

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Dunning said he is excited that the students are speaking up but said they have nothing to worry about. He said they modelled their new mission statement following that of a few status=<http://wfxl.com/news/local/asu>.

"One of the things that we will be doing, we have four foundational documents so HBCU is going to be immersed in two documents. The mission statement is a short statement. We modelled our mission statement after two of the best HBCU's in the country," said Dr. Dunning. "So they didn't mention it but they are an HBCU because of higher education act of 1965. That doesn't change anything. Its how you decided you want to present who you are and what your future is," he added.

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"What Dillard did was put what they call strategic pillars. We'll call our guiding principle: one thing which comes right under the mission statement that highlights the HBCU heritage, the HBCU mission and what we've been doing historically. HBCU came into being in 1964 because of a higher education act. So it's not going away but because you do not have a sentence in there does not mean anything changes," Dunning said.

Student Government Association President Laurentiis Gaines said even after they sent their concerns to the president, before the mission statement was approved the mission statement didn't change.

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"That's when he began to state that he wanted to implement the history and guiding principle. We're not negating the fact plus google.com/share?url=http://wfxl.com/news/local/asu-student-body-hold-silent-protest-over-new-mission-statement that the student body has asked for. They specifically asked for it to be in the mission," Gaines said.


Gaines said Dunning said the term HBCU not being in the mission statement would not hurt or help the university.


"So what's the issue with putting it in there? Why not? And I understand that you are mirroring a higher ranked institution but at the end of the day that institution is not us. They're not facing what we're facing right now. They're not facing a consolidation.

Gaines said their goal was to find out if the mission statement could be revisited by the board of regents.



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"In my mind the mission does not take effect until January 1 2017, so we have a couple of months. And I personally feel like it was rushed," Gaines said. "I strongly feel that we still have enough time to revisit this mission especially now that the students have expressed in a multitude that they want to see HBCU in the mission," he added.

So I asked Gaines what was next.

"Like Dr. Dunning said the next CIC; Consolidation Implementation Committee, the next time we have a meeting; everything that I said today I'm going to bring it up again. It's unfair to me when I represent 3500 students and you have other consolidation committee members who represent maybe 10 to 15 in their department," Gaines said.

ORIGINAL STORY:

Albany State University student body are upset and held a silent protest on Friday because the term Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) was not included in the new mission statement for the new ASU.

(<http://wfxl.com/news/local/new-mission-statement-approved-for-the-new-albany-state-university>)

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"We did the silent protest because we want the HBCU right there in plain bold words in our mission statement and that was not given to us for the report on Wednesday. And we have been asking for that and it still has not been on there," said Jeremy Jones, Graduating Senior Mathematics Major at Albany State University. "So we feel like we're not being listened to right now. So just to make sure that our voices are heard, a silent peaceful protest," he added.

The current Albany Statement University's Mission statement does include the term HBCU. But with the consolidation of both ASU and Darton Sate College, the term HBCU was taken out of the new ASU mission statement.

Jones said he believes HBCU should be in the mission because with the consolidation with Darton State College, they are absorbing the college and they shouldn't give up their heritage and history as a HBCU.

"HBCU's receive special funding. Students get special scholarships because they go to a HBCU and minority schools. So we want to make sure our students get the quality education, the funding that they need so that they can develop themselves and become productive members of society," Jones said.

The protest began at Honors Day 2016 program in the Hyper Gymnasium at the University. The students dressed in all black stood up and walked out after all the honor students had been recognized and given their awards and right before president of ASU Art Dunning got up to present the employee of the year award.

"Because honors convocation is big for students; we want everybody to be recognized for their academic accomplishments," Jones said. "We did not want to take anything away from the students," he added.

They gathered at the gravesite of the founder of the University after they walked out of the Honors Day event singing and chanting. They were also gathered at L'Orene Hall which was where a reception was held for the student honorees from the Honor Day program.

Jones said and in addition to including HBCU in the new mission statement, the students want to be included in decision making.

"We hope that we get HBCU in the mission statement. We also want more ASU alumni and students in the consolidation meeting teams so that we can make sure that our voice and concerns are being heard so that it's not a he said she said type of thing," Jones said.

Coreen Jackson, President of the National Association of African American Honors Programs (NAAAHP) who was the guest speaker at the Honors Day program for the University spoke to the students protesting outside L'Orene Hall to express her appreciation for the students letting their voice be heard.

"HBCU's as the research shows graduates most of the black engineers, the black STEM scholars that come out of these schools. So HBCU's must be honored and appreciated for the legacy for what they have done in helping to shape the lives and mold the lives," Jackson said.

She said NAAAHP is a Consortium of about 64 HBCU's in the country and she represents over 100 HBCU's throughout the United States.

"I am not quite sure all about the discussion. I was just informed that they were just trying to take the word HBCU out of it. But I think it's important to know that we are in this together. If this was built in 1903 as a HBCU, then it should remain an HBCU," Jackson said. "Now with this consolidation,

I am not sure all of the ramifications that is surrounding it; however we hope that the students' voice will be a consideration. That the legislatures would think about what this means to them," she added.

Jones also encouraged students that besides making their voices heard today, they also need to make it count at the polls.

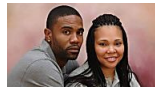
"We also want students to become proactive rather than reactionary as far as voting in regular elections," Jones said. "We didn't vote for the governor; however the governor appoints the chancellor, as well as presidents and the board of regents. Had we voted for the governor, we could have had things go our way," he added.

Students were hoping to express their thoughts and feelings to ASU president Art Dunning at the Honors Day reception at L'Orene Hall but Dunning had to attend another meeting at Darton. SGA President Laurentis Gaines told the students that Dunning said he would meet with the students at 4 P.M.

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