

OPINION

Student Opinion Poll:

# BelleSpeak

1996 is a presidential election year, and the political parties are gearing their strategies of acquiring the crucial African-American vote, as well as the Generation X vote. There is even talk of holding one of the debates on an HBCU campus.

Photos by Tahja McVay  
Banner Sports Editor

## How would you feel about a U.S. presidential debate held on a HBCU campus?



**BRENDA DRAYTON**  
SENIOR  
SOCIAL WORK  
HOME STATE: FLORIDA  
It would be interesting for the students. It would bring about a good atmosphere for them.



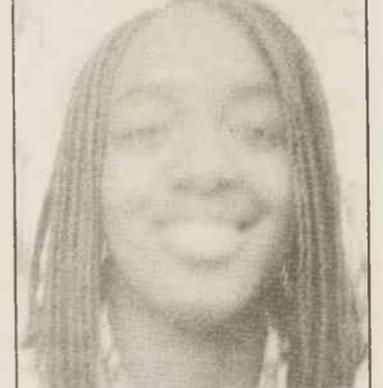
**SHANIKA CHOO-YING**  
FRESHWOMAN  
BIOLOGY MAJOR  
HOME STATE: NEW YORK  
I think it is a good idea. The president will hear what the students have to say. Maybe it will have an influence on his decisions.



**RITA MOORE**  
SENIOR  
EDUCATION  
HOME STATE: NORTH CAROLINA  
It would be educational and informative because most young black students do not get involved in political issues on campus.



**ANDREA JENERETTE**  
FRESHWOMAN  
POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR  
HOME STATE: NEW JERSEY  
The issue is definitely something to think about because the majority of college students do vote and it's only fair that they get to hear the issues for themselves.



**LATONIA FORD**  
FRESHWOMAN  
HOME STATE: SOUTH CAROLINA  
A debate would let young black students know that the president wants to know their opinions and then know him.

## Morehouse student campaigns for the future of HBCUs

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are not only educational gems, but national treasures. As a tribute to their legacy, Clark Atlanta University freshman Sean Gardner has initiated a petition urging the American political parties to converse one of the 1996 Presidential debates at an HBCU.

This would be a first for American politics. Since Oct. 2 more than 20,000 signatures have been collected. After collecting 100,000 plus signatures, Gardner will then mail the petitions to the Commission on Presidential Debates, the League of Women Voters, the Democratic National Committee, the Republican National Committee, the Rainbow Coalition, and Ross Perot's Reform Party, among other political entities. Assisted in the early stages by Herman Reese, board member of the 100

Black Men of Atlanta, William Boone, chair of CAU's political science department, and Kelly Walton, a CAU student, Gardner has since enlisted the help of people and organizations from around the country and throughout the Atlanta University Center (which includes Clark Atlanta University,

Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Interdenominational Theological Center). Because all 117 HBCUs personify the concept of "the Global Village," and have a long track record of academic excellence, Gardner believes that they are uniquely qualified to host a Presidential debate. Furthermore, because 1996 marks the 100th anniversary of the wretched 1896 Supreme Court case, Plessy vs. Ferguson (which stated that

African Americans and whites were "separate but equal"), choosing an HBCU, would be a great way of showing how far race relations have progressed in a century. It is Gardner's hope that this endeavor will bring HBCUs permanently into the international spotlight by demonstrating that they are not only ready to meet the challenges and configurations of the 21 century, but determined to remain a major force throughout the next millennium. Gardner is organizing a major press conference for Feb. 14, to be at the Robert Woodruff Library, in the heart of the Atlanta University Center. It will bring together various local and regional student leaders to voice their support for this project, and consternation for the proposed cuts in student financial aid and the threat to eliminate federal funding for public HBCUs.

*Sean Gardner, a freshman at Morehouse College is doing his part to preserve the financial future of our HBCUs. He also plans to organize a presidential debate on an HBCU campus.*

**".... HBCUs...have a long track record of academic excellence"**

--Sean Gardner

### THE BENNETT BANNER



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