

Jeb Bush says conflict prevents FAMU commencement address

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Gov. Jeb Bush said Wednesday a scheduling conflict will prevent him from speaking at Florida A&M University's graduation, which some students said they wouldn't attend if he did.

Students from the predominantly black school have been heavily involved in protests against Bush's order ending affirmative action in state hiring and university admissions.

Bush had been invited by interim President Henry Lewis to be the commencement speaker at the April 27 ceremony.

"I probably am able to only accept one out of 20 invitations," Bush said while speaking to reporters at a business opening in Macclenny. "I had a previous commitment on that day."

Bush said he didn't know what the commitment was, but he thought it was something in northeast Florida. "It was handled by the scheduling people," he said.

Bush's schedule is only publicly released one day in advance.

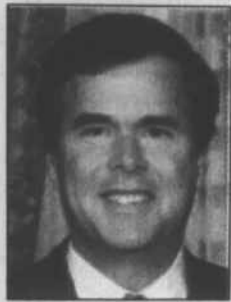
At a March 6 rally commemorating the second anniversary of a large march in Tallahassee protesting the governor's affirmative action policies, FAMU student government president Andrew Gillum drew applause when he said students "will not sit through a ceremony adorned by a governor who doesn't believe in our institution."

Bush said he wasn't avoiding the school.

"I'm not particularly worried about protests," Bush said. "I was invited by the president to speak and hopefully sometime in the future I will be able to do it."

African Methodist Episcopal Bishop A.J. Richardson will deliver the school's commencement address.

"Being that this is an election year and Gov. Bush is not the most popular person with this class, I think it's much more acceptable to have Rev. Richardson," Gillum said.



Bush

Mural with Klan images to stay up

Indiana University will not disturb a mural that includes the Ku Klux Klan in its depictions over the objections from the Black Student Union.

Last week, Sharon Stephens Brehm, the university's chancellor, told reporters that removing the mural would be akin to hiding part of the state's past.

Thomas Hart Benton painted the mural in 1933 for the Chicago World's Fair. Indiana was a Klan nerve center during this period and a section of the mural shows hooded Klansmen burning a cross.

The university has taken actions, including installing a plaque by the mural. It explains that the mural is not intended to glorify the Klan. Also, all professors are required each semester to show students in their classes a video explaining the mural.

"If you are African-American, if you don't know your history of the mural, if you have no context in which to interpret it, and if you have no choice about seeing it, it's quite likely this will be an unpleasant and discomforting experience," Brehm told reporters.

Students have said that the video is rarely shown and have complained that the mural is a distraction.

"Our bigger issue was diversity on campus, but we realized that we had to start small, so that was the mural," said Shannon Walden, political action chairman for the Black Student Union.

Magic Johnson tells university crowd that open-mindedness can end racism

ST. CLOUD, Minn. — Basketball legend Earvin "Magic" Johnson told 3,000 people at St. Cloud State University that open-mindedness can help eliminate the school's growing reputation for intolerance.

"Every community is going to have blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians, and you're going to encounter all kinds of people through school, through business," Johnson said Wednesday at Halenbeck Hall. "We've got to learn to work together. That's what it's all about."

A federal report released in February concluded that faculty and staff members believe institutionalized bias, sexism, racism, and anti-Semitism exist at the school.

Johnson, a member of the NBA Hall of Fame, was asked how a community like St. Cloud could deal with racial tensions.

"I'm from Lansing, Mich., a town about this size with a university — I'm just like you," said Johnson, 42. "I grew up with no money, had one suit and two pair of pants. ... Don't let anybody shatter your dreams. I was once you."

Johnson has become a successful businessman since he retired from basketball. He is the chief executive of Magic Johnson Enterprises and it's estimated he is worth between \$300 million and \$400 million.

While Johnson has hinted that he might run for mayor of Los Angeles — where he starred for the Lakers — he said Wednesday he is not sure he "wants to give up all the things I do now and that's a full-time job."

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INDEX	
OPINION.....	A6
SPORTS.....	B1
RELIGION.....	B6
CLASSIFIEDS.....	B10
HEALTH.....	C3
ENTERTAINMENT.....	C7
CALENDAR.....	C9

Black women say there is a lack of black men on campuses

BY MEGAN SCOTT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — The strip through the campus of Clark Atlanta University looks like a fashion runway, even at 8 a.m.

Young women walk by in tight skirts, designer tops, high heels and makeup — looking like they're going to a club instead of calculus.

But when you're at a school with nearly 3,600 women and only 1,500 men, some women don't want to miss an opportunity to look their best and catch the eyes of some of the campus' high-demand males.

Around the country, colleges are becoming increasingly more female, but the imbalance is even greater at historically black colleges such as Clark, which is 71 percent women.

Some students say it creates a campus culture in which women desperately try to attract college-educated black males, and men act like commitment-phobic "dawgs" because they can pick and choose from a surplus of women.

"The girlfriend thing is cool but it's not going much further than that," said William Noble, a 29-year-old who will begin graduate school at nearby Georgia State University in the fall. "Men are out there to see what's what."

Clark students find out early about the female-to-male ratio.

"During orientation, they had us in the multipurpose room," said freshman Chantel Runnels. "They had males sitting on one side and females sitting on the other side. The females were going all the way back. The males went to like the fifth row."

"That was scary," she added. "What are black men doing?"

Black males are graduating from high school at rates equal to whites, but many are choosing not to enroll in college. Many join the military or go straight into the work force. And others get caught up in the criminal justice system — where they make up 47 percent of the prison population.

That makes things tough on black female college students and graduates who are looking for mates with those of similar educational backgrounds, said Robert Billingham, an associate professor of human development at Indiana University.

In 1996, nearly 28 percent of black college-educated women over the age of 25 had never married compared with 16 percent of white women, according to a 2000 study published in the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education.

When the freshmen males arrived on campus last fall, they went wild when they saw so many females, Taylor said. She overheard guys talking about being able to "pretty much have any girl I want."

"It's just that there are so many girls," she said. "I've heard guys say, 'I'm going to be moving, I'm going to have girls in and out of my room.'"

Ryan Russell, a fifth-year student, admitted he was happy when he first arrived on campus for his freshman year, saying he had never been around so many beautiful black women.

Russell said he was greedy — talking to more than one female at a time and "playing the field."

"I remember at induction standing in a line with the guys next to the girls line," Russell said. "The guys were pointing at the girls saying, 'There's my eight right there.'"

That atmosphere doesn't necessarily bode well for those seeking long-term relationships.

Freda White, a Georgia State junior, said she hasn't been out on a date since September and her last boyfriend was more than four years ago. The attractive, petite political science major said she spends most Friday nights in her dorm room.

"I'm confused," the 21-year-old said. "What is it they don't see in me that turns them away from me? I feel like something may be wrong with me."

Billingham believes colleges need to place more emphasis on recruiting black males — outside of athletics.



Photo by Courtney Gaillard

Black men are becoming rare on college campuses, some say.

Otherwise, he said, the discrepancy between college-educated black men and women will become even more problematic.

And once a black woman graduates from college, Billingham said, it only becomes harder to find a mate, especially if she ends up in the white-dominated corporate world.

Doris Derby, director of the Office of African-American Student Services and Programs at Georgia State, said black women need to understand that they can have much in common with men who have not gone to college.

She said there are plenty of successful black men without degrees, including construction workers, mechanics, military personnel and small business owners.

"I think that young girls have a certain view — idealistic. They're thinking the young man not only has to have an education but a higher education and a better job and so forth," Derby said. "If they don't have some flexibility and some realization

in their life, they'll end up single."

Gwen Grant, an advice columnist for Essence magazine, said educated black women should also consider dating outside of their race. Otherwise, their options are going to be extremely limited.

But White said she will date only black men. And Patrice Lee, a black Georgia State doctoral student, said she has dated foreign men but the cultural differences created problems.

Grant lectures black women not to settle for just any black men because they are worried about the gruesome statistics.

"I think our horizons cannot be limited to the campus we live on," she said. "Our limited thinking has limited our options. There's a world out there."

Many black women say they will not lower their standards.

"I feel like I'm a very focused individual and I'm not going to settle for anything," said Clark freshman Naqwan Taylor. "If I want something, I want something that's up to par."

NOTICE MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is seeking minority and women-owned firms (M/WBE) to bid on upcoming highway projects throughout the State. The Locations of the projects are:

Project No.	County/Route	Type	Location	Metric/English	GOALS BY PERCENT		
					DBE	MBE	WBE
6.172001R	Craven	Closed Loop System	From Hickman Hill Rd to McCotter Blvd. in Havelock	English	0%	0%	
6.269002T & 8.1261402	Onslow	Paving & Structures	Jacksonville Bypass from US-258/NC-24 to NC 24 West of Jacksonville	English	10%		
7.2811138 & 8.7328003	Sampson	Widening, Resurfacing & Pavement markings	US-13 from the Cumberland County Line to US 421	English	9%		
8.1290701	Edgecombe	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Town Creek & Approaches on NC-43	English	10%		
8.1321202	Halifax	Pavement Rehabilitation, Signing & Rail Retrofit	I-95 from North of SR-1524 in Nash County to South of NC-481 in Halifax County	English	10%		
8.2290801	Edgecombe	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Tar River and approaches on SR-1252	English	10%		
8.2290901	Edgecombe	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Fishing Creek & approaches on SR-1500	English	8%		
8.1360801	Franklin	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Cedar Creek & approaches on NC-39	English	9%		
8.1402505	Wake	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	NC-98 (Wake Forest Bypass) from West of US-1A (S. Main St.) to East of SR-2053 (Jones Dairy Road)	Metric	10%		
8.2405101	Wake	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Norfolk Southern Corp. & approaches on SR-1564 (So. Wilmington St.)	English	5%		
7.3811332	Person	Resurfacing, Shdr. Reconst. & Pavement Markings	1 Section of NC-57, 1 Section of US-158 & 6 Sections of Secondary Roads	English	5%	3%	
8.1494502	Alamance, Guilford	Milling, Resurfacing & Pavement Markings	I85/40 from E of SR-3056 (Rock Creek Dairy Rd) to W of SR-1158 (Huffman Mill)	English	9%		
8.2496503	Guilford	Grading, Drainage & Paving	SR-1112 (Wolftrail Rd) from SR-1104 (Old Randleman Rd) to SR-1007 (Randleman Rd)	English	10%		
6.622001R	Forsyth	Closed Loop System	CBD Closed Loop System in Kernersville	English	0%	0%	
8.2732401	Caldwell	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structure	Bridge over Blue Creek and approaches on SR-1552	English	6%		
8.2750601	Watauga	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Culvert	RC Box Culvert at Boone Creek & approach on SR-1547 in Boone	English	9%		
8.2970401	Macon	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Culvert	SR-1659 (Depot St. Ext) from US-441 Bus Bias (Main St) to SR-1323 (River View St.)	Metric	9%		
8.1402210	Wake	Grading, Drainage, Paving & Structures	US-64 from I-440 (Raleigh Beltline) to New Hope Rd.	Metric	11%		

*** MONDAY, April 15, 2002 6 PM - MIDNIGHT ***

North Raleigh Hilton - 3415 Wake Forest Road - Raleigh, N.C.

LETTING DATE: April 16, 2002

Prime contractors will be available to receive quotes for trucking, sub-contracting and materials. M/WBE's needing more information and/or technical assistance may come to Room 522 to meet with representatives from the Bennington Corp., NCDOT's Supportive Provider. (919)832-6027

NCDOT Office of Civil Rights & Business Development 1-800-522-0453

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