

Missing Howard Student Found Unharmd

Contributed by Royce Strayhan -- Black College Wire
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Few details released about disappearance of James Duncan III

The university community was relieved when the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) announced on April 14 that missing Howard University student James Duncan III had been found. According to a university press release, Duncan was located Tuesday unharmed in an undisclosed location. Metropolitan police and the Howard University Police Department declined to comment, due to Duncan's wish for privacy, but Duncan's mother, Terry Ellenberg, did speak about how pleased she was after receiving word of her son's whereabouts.

"I'm very happy right now," Ellenberg said. "I haven't seen him yet, but I'm about to go to see if I can find him where I was told he was seen."

It had been more than two weeks since Duncan had been declared missing, but some said they believe the student body did not do as much as they could have done to find the 24-year-old sophomore.

For safety reasons, HUSA President Nicholas Owen was advised by the HUPD to insist that students be cautious in their efforts to help find Duncan.

Historically, Howard students have been known to advocate justice and support their colleagues, but students like Victoria Thomas believe popularity plays a role in the lack of effort that Howard students exuded in finding Duncan.

"[Duncan], being so quiet and to himself, might be the reason why he's been missing so long and people really didn't know until recently," said Thomas, a sophomore public relations major.

"If he was known by more students," she said, "his presence is something that would be missed by many people as opposed to someone who wasn't out there from the get-go." Junior marketing major William Worley said he feels Howard students should put the same effort in caring for all of their colleagues.

"Howard students are often apathetic, but I never would've expected such a lack of concern for an issue of this magnitude," Worley said. "I think if Duncan ran in what was considered the popular crowd, then you would've seen the campus a bit more involved in trying to get him home safely."

University-wide calls for prayer have been conducted for students involved in the Jena "6" the Virginia Tech tragedy and other misfortunes that have occurred at other universities. Some students wonder why there was such apathy for their own colleague.

"Since not a lot of people knew him, people weren't really standing up to find him," said

Junior business major Tyesha Tucker said, "If it was someone who was well-known on campus, there would have been more people than just his mom on campus passing out fliers and asking if anyone knows where her child was."

Tucker said students should be doing much more to help in the efforts to find their colleague.

"I just think students need to take more of an initiative," Tucker said. "If [there had been] a reward, I'm sure more students would have been willing to help, but students need to have a genuine interest in finding him. It's really sad that the student body didn't take more action."

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Royce Strayhan writes for The Hilltop, the Howard University student newspaper, which originally published this article.