

South Carolina State President Resigns

Contributed by Teiya Campbell -- Black College Wire
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Dr. George Cooper will leave amid issues "beyond my control"

Dr. George Cooper has resigned as president of South Carolina State University. In a press conference on the steps of Lowman Hall, Dr. Cooper read his resignation letter, addressed to Vice Chairman and Director of the SC State University Board of Trustees, Dr. John Corbitt.

"Please note: my resignation is voluntary," said Dr. Cooper. He said that he wanted to devote time to his family and other career interests.

His resignation is effective March 30. "In the next 30 days, I will continue to work with the Board [of Trustees]."

"The University was having issues beyond my control," said Dr. Cooper. He was president of SC State for four years.

"SC State is alive and well," said Dr. Corbitt. "We will move forward in a positive way."

Dr. Robert Nance, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the SC State Board of Trustees, spoke after Dr. Corbitt. "We… offer a formal and heartfelt apology to all of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni here at South Carolina State University and the citizens of South Carolina."

Dr. Nance addressed the "serious allegations regarding criminal misconduct, unethical conduct and mismanagement." He stated that the SC State Internal Auditor's office, with help from "outside counsel" and the SC State Human Resources Office, investigated the accusations. The investigation led to the termination of several SC State employees.

Attorney Reginald Lloyd, hired by the university, stated that SC State has brought the accusations to the "appropriate law enforcement agencies," and the accused personnel are getting the due process that they are entitled to.

One of the terminated employees was Gene Breland. He was not satisfied by the Board's press release. "I still don't even know why I was fired, and I filed a grievance on February 13," said Breland. "I do not think it is fair that the Board gave Cooper a chance to explain his resignation, but did not give the accused employees a chance to speak."

Some students and faculty agreed with the Dr. Cooper's decision.

Professor Willie Legette felt that the resignation was "long overdue," and sophomore Omari Bennett felt that "[Dr.] Cooper had no vision" for SC State University.

The Board of Trustees, represented by Dr. Corbitt, encouraged SC State to stay positive.

"Today, we begin a long, hard journey to restore, rebuild, and re-establish confidence, integrity, and trust in our beloved university," said Dr. Corbitt.

Teiya Campbell writes for The Collegian, the South Carolina State University student newspaper, which originally published this article.

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