

Florida A&M University's Probation Lifted

Contributed by Josh King -- Black College Wire
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Ammons declares 'FAMU in good hands'

Despite short notice, more than a 300 students, faculty and members of the community attended an afternoon press conference on the Florida A&M University campus June 26 to hear the much-anticipated good news. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges removed FAMU from probationary status at the commission's summer meeting. The university retains its accreditation.

"We are very proud of and excited for FAMU for all of their hard work to come into compliance with the commission's standards; and therefore, get off of probation," said SACS President Belle S. Wheelan.

FAMU president James Ammons called it "a great day for FAMU and the state of Florida."

He said the university had met the challenge. "We have been able to solve and address the critical issues that threatened the very existence of this university. Through our success, we have preserved this institution's legacy for generations to come."

Ammons suspended school operations until 2 p.m. allowing employees and staff to attend. And to add to the celebration, new freshmen who were attending orientation and their parents were allowed to take part in the event.

"Our intent was to restore the public's trust in the university's ability to handle its finances, and I believe this entire process has sent a strong and clear message to the state and our stakeholders that FAMU is in good hands," Ammons said.

SACS had placed FAMU on probation last June for being out of compliance on 10 accrediting standards, including financial management and record-keeping.

Student body president Andrew Collins, 22, called the event a "momentous occasion."

Collins said the administration has guaranteed FAMU a future and he applauded Ammons and his staff for the role they played in getting the probation lifted.

"Rest assured that FAMU will not grow complacent from this recent success, as there is still much work to be done continuing with the mission and accreditation is a continuous and ongoing process," Collins said.

Collins also said he wanted to clear up a misconception about the state of the university. "FAMU never lost its accreditation, [it was] only on probation during review by SACS," he said.

Collins said he expects enrollment will increase. "Students will take pride in their institution and speak highly about it," he said. "Prospective students won't have an issue when choosing FAMU for their education; their decision will be much easier."

Earl Tennyson Jr., 20, a junior psychology student from Houston, said he was surprised that FAMU worked together to get the job done so quickly.

"I hope this positive manner continues to go on," Tennyson said.

Student body vice president Mellori Lumpkin, 21, said she is excited by this great accomplishment.

"It's the beginning of a new era," she said. "We have the opportunity to focus on institution development. We now have a foundation to expand our programs and lay the premise for future development."

Lumpkin also said this achievement lifts the veil of uncertainty FAMU once had. "It confirms the decision that you made to come to FAMU was the right one. It's a new day and FAMU is here!"

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