

## Battle Sees Brighter Days Ahead in Aggieland

Contributed by Whitney Dickens -- Black College Wire  
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After a year, North Carolina A&T chancellor reports progress

"Oh, what a happy day! I am so happy to put my freshman year at A&T behind me," said Chancellor Stanley F. Battle, as he addressed faculty and students in a filled Harrison Auditorium recently.

Battle said there is a bright future ahead for North Carolina A&T State University.

On July 1, 2007, the chancellor walked into the middle of a storm. It was frustrating, but he didn't blame anybody. Stories were on the front page of papers, and at the top of the news broadcasts about A&T's financial problems from the past. Current enrollment was down and there was an estimated loss of 4.1 million dollars. One thing Battle stated that he learned during his first year was "Aggie Pride." He said, "No one can take Aggie Pride away from you".

With all of the negative talk and actions going on at A&T, Battle worked to reverse the perception of A&T, stating, "The future is not a place that we are going to but one we are creating."

Within just one year, he and many others have seen the campus grow and prosper as young minds are being prepared for a lifelong learning experience.

"We are exploring new paths to lead in new directions," he added.

One of the many progressions at A&T is a change in attitude.

Battle said he is making sure the funding agencies are up to date, and he realizes that everything won't be fixed in a short amount of time.

Serious adjustments are being made and he is determined to retain the quality of students on campus. The chancellor has implemented a program called Dowdy Scholars, named after a former chancellor, Lewis C. Dowdy and his wife Elizabeth. It is based on GPA and SAT scores of incoming freshmen. Four-year scholarships are awarded to top students.

This year, 187 students were admitted into the Dowdy Scholars program. Within 25 years, this is the best class coming into A&T. The average GPA has gone from 2.9 to 3.22, and the average SAT score has gone from 888 to 947. A lot is expected from the Dowdy Scholars, but the main goal is increased retention rates.

Along with the Dowdy Scholars program, two other academic initiatives were implemented. Those include the Cosby kids and the Greensboro Technical Community College (GTCC) agreement. The Cosby Kids program begins with fourth graders and by the time they come to A&T, they have scholarship support. The GTCC agreement allows students to attend the college and later attend A&T. This agreement also includes 15 other community colleges. Eighty students are receiving help with financial aid, choirs on campus are being funded, and new academic programs are being added.

The refund check situation has changed to no more than a week wait. Two new buildings are set to open, and more than 13.4 million dollars has been raised. All while scores in the nursing program are improving significantly, the program has a 95-96 percent pass rate.

"If we don't have students, we won't be here," Battle acknowledged. "Excellence, intelligence, and honesty will not be compromised."

With that, The chancellor set high expectations for the upcoming year and many goals. In his words, "If we support each other, we can take anybody or anything on."

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Whitney Dickens writes for the A&T Register, which originally published a version of this article.