

'Indecent' Dress, Lewd Conduct Banned at JSU

Contributed by Sidney Collins -- Black College Wire
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Punishment includes fines, community service

Jackson State University students are expected to behave and dress in a manner that represents the university in a positive way. For the 2008-2009 school term, JSU students are being asked to heed and obey a decorum policy that was first instituted last year.

The policy which focuses on dress, language and keeping the campus litter-free, encourages students to act in a professional manner while on campus or any university sponsored event.

The decorum policy states, "Conduct which is disorderly, lewd, indecent and or portrayed on the premises of the university or at university sponsored events will not be tolerated." However, there are conflicting ideas about whether the policy is being strictly enforced.

One campus public safety officer who asked to remain anonymous, said enforcement of other policies has not been strong. "I just don't know what to do. First they tell us to do one thing, then they tell us to do another. At the beginning of the fall semester of 2007, they told us to give tickets to students who were caught walking around campus without IDs, but that issue has not been strongly enforced this year."

Most students interviewed said the policy should be enforced, while others feel it is pointless and that they should not be told what to do or what to wear.

"I think for the most part students have been following the policy, but I feel that most students are going to do what they want to do," said De' Arbrey Lee, a freshman from Pittsburg, Calif.

Aramis Gentoy, a freshman from Memphis, Tenn., favors the policy. "I don't feel that the decorum is too strict. I feel that we should go by the rules," Gentoy said.

Ricky Booker, a junior political science major from Greenwood, Miss., believes that enforcing the policy will be beneficial in the long-run to prepare students in the real world.

"I believe that following the rules will help us not only be better students, but it will help us know how to dress and act outside of the university as well," said Booker.

The Department of Public Safety expects students to take the policy seriously.

"We want to make sure we have enough information before we start to (strictly) enforce the policy. We have had several violations against the policy last year, and we gave out tickets to students who violated the rules. The policy will be much stricter this year. We are going to enforce the profanity and ID issue," said Sgt. Angela Butler.

Violating the decorum policy will first result in a verbal warning and a written record will be placed in the student's file.

Community service may also be given if deemed necessary. Fines may also range from \$50 - \$200 and probation and/ or campus service and counseling.

Marcus Chanay, associate vice president for Student Life, said from his observations, the majority of students seem to be adhering to the policy.

"IDs are being worn visibly and the dress policy is being enforced in the classroom and at official university functions," Chanay said.

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Sidney Collins writes for the Blue & White Flash, the Jackson State University student newspaper, which originally published a version of this article.