'Get Dressed or Get Out'

Contributed by TeNaya Farmer -- Black College Wire
Friday, 03 October 2008

Savannah State develops student dress code policy

Sagging.

It is a practice that has been under attack in recent years.

On Sept. 2, members of Savannah State University's President's Cabinet approved a new dress code policy during their monthly meeting which, among other things, prohibits sagging pants on campus.

Neighboring Jasper County, S.C., has passed a law banning it, and the Savannah City Council is considering an ordinance that would strictly forbid sagging pants.

The fine in Jasper County for sagging calls for a maximum penalty of $500 and 30 days in jail. In other cities across the nation, including places such as Trenton, La., and Atlanta, Ga., there have been numerous proposed ordinances to ban the practice.

Savannah's city council joined the opposition this past August by considering a ban that could be stricter than others.

The definition of sagging can best be described as wearing pants or shorts below the waist, revealing some or all of an individual's underwear. It is a common practice among young men, but in recent years some young women have also begun to practice the style of sagging.

The policy states that the main objective is to ensure that every student will have the opportunity to experience success inside and outside of the classroom. During the meeting, the administrators decided that SSU students are encouraged to dress appropriately on the campus and will be denied admission to various functions if their manner of dress is inappropriate, said Lelia Robinson.

The new policy is getting mixed reviews from the student body. "Do we look like we are in high school?" said Jasmin Woodson, a Richmond County senior.

On a more positive note, Katie Dixon, a senior from Newnan County, agrees with the policy. "It is a good thing. I got tired of seeing things that should be covered," Dixon said.

The policy was approved by the President's Cabinet. "A change in clothing also brings about a change in attitude and self-confidence. Just take in reference that if you dress successful, you feel successful, and you will become successful," said Errol Hooper, SGA President.

"As college students, we are being prepared to enter the professional ranks of many different fields. One general factor in all of these professions is proper dress," said Jennifer Stanley, a junior from Laurens County.

Differing views among administrative officials and students are nothing new.

Savannah State University has been battling the problem of sagging pants for years.

While many youths think that sagging is just a "style" that they picked up, according to socyberty.com, sagging originated in jail, where criminals had their belts and shoelaces taken away because they believed that they could be used for suicide, or could be used to strangle other cellmates.

 On another note, sagging has been accepted in our generation as a fashion statement, and it was that purpose that drove Reginald Blanchett to "sag."

"I sag as a part of fashion. I have a belt buckle that I love to wear, so I sag my pants to make sure that it shows," said Blanchett, a junior mass communications major at Savannah State University.

Savannah State University's new dress code policy states that" inappropriate dress may include, but is not limited to, halter tops, any shirt that exposes bare midriff or bare back, T-shirts with obscene or offensive language, gestures, or slogans, undershirts customarily worn as undergarments-tank tops, white gauze shirts and clothing which allows undergarments to be visually observed such as pants for men and women that may be too revealing, sagging pants and extreme low riders."

In addition, the policy states that during certain university events, the dress is "business attire" (Examples: Founder's Day, Honor's Day, banquets, career fairs, awards programs, pageants, lecture series).

"All administrative, faculty and support staff members will be expected to monitor student behavior applicable to this dress code and report students after two (2) repeated violations to the Office of Student Ethics, where cases will be processed as a 'Failure to Comply' sanction as noted in the Code of Student Ethics," the policy states.
Some students agree with the new dress code policy.

"A change in clothing also brings about a change in attitude and self-confidence," said Quakeisha Thomason, a senior from Liberty County. "Just take in reference that if you dress successful, you feel successful and you will become successful."

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TeNaya Farmer writes for the Tiger's Roar, the Savannah State University student newspaper, which originally published this article.