

From: Smith, Kevin
Sent time: Wednesday, November 30, 2011 12:48:56 AM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>; Lee, Laurie; Colle, Hope; Evan Lefsky <elefsky@cfl.rr.com>
Subject: FW: 11/29/11 Education Round-Up

FYI - Have a great day!

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith,
Educational Policy Analyst,
Just Read, Florida! Office
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 501
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 245-0503
(850) 245-5105 (Fax)
www.justreadflorida.com



From: Higgins, Deborah
Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2011 12:09 PM
Subject: 11/29/11 Education Round-Up

The clips service is not working today. I apologize for any inconvenience. Thank you. Deborah

Today's News:

Orlando Sentinel: Race to Top funds critical teacher programs
Ft. Myers News Press: Guest opinion: Edison on path to nursing bachelor's accreditation
Ft. Myers News Press: Lee, Collier county educators among those searching for system fix
NW FL Daily News: Teachers wear bracelets to raise awareness about new evaluation criteria
Sun-Sentinel: Schools slipping on African and African-American history lessons
St. Pete Times: Pinellas School Board removes 'interim' from superintendent's title
Flagler Live: Florida Universities Respond to Rick Scott's Inquisition With a Massive Document Dump
St. Pete Times: Ousted FAMU band director says he fought to end hazing
Tallahassee Democrat: Editorial: Marching 100 out of step
Tallahassee Democrat: White: 'I did everything I could'
Tallahassee Democrat: FAMU's Julian White deserves full airing of his anti-hazing efforts
US News: Top 10 Universities With the Most Undergraduate Students

Orlando Sentinel

Race to Top funds critical teacher programs

By Leslie Postal

6:21 PM EST, November 28, 2011

Florida needs more math and science teachers for its middle and high schools and will use Race to the Top winnings to spur the education of more of these critical instructors, according to the Florida Department of Education.

The state wants to triple the number of colleges or universities with "UTeach" programs, modeled on a University of Texas initiative.

Florida State University and the University of Florida already have UTeach programs, and the state wants to add four more. UTeach is a joint venture between teacher education and math and science departments. The goal is to graduate students who have majored in their discipline — be that biology, chemistry or math — and also have learned how to teach.

Florida wants more students to go into the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math. But every year, secondary math and science teachers are on the state's "critical shortage" list, meaning there aren't enough "degreed science and math teachers to inspire students," the department said.

Florida won \$700 million in the federal Race to the Top education reform competition last year. Nearly \$7.6 million of that is available, in a competition, for new UTeach programs.

"I think it's a great opportunity for the state of Florida," said Tom Dana, associate dean of UF's education college.

Unlike in traditional teacher programs, students in UTeach programs take regular math and science courses.

"They're taking the tough classes just like anyone else," he said. "They're not taking a water-downed version of the curriculum."

That course work, combined with a minor in education, produces math and science teaching candidates whom schools are hungry for, Dana added.

A spokesman for the University of Central Florida didn't say whether the university would apply. The deadline is Feb. 10.

Ft. Myers News Press

Guest opinion: Edison on path to nursing bachelor's accreditation

8:22 PM, Nov. 28, 2011 |

Written by Denise McNulty Special to news-press.com

It has truly been a journey.

Having worked as a leader and educator in hospital settings in Philadelphia and Southwest Florida for more than 20 years, I made a decision to transition full-time to the world of academia at Edison State College in March.

Upon my arrival, I learned the person who hired me was about to retire.

I was asked to serve as the Interim Director of Nursing for the District until a dean is hired. I wholeheartedly accepted this challenge, having enjoyed working as an adjunct professor at the Collier Campus since 2004.

I knew that Edison State's successful two-year registered nurses program was fully accredited. But after my arrival, I learned the bachelor's of science in nursing program,

which is designed for licensed registered nurses who want to advance their education, had not begun the accreditation process. At that point, I felt confident that we would do everything in our power to remedy the situation.

With a goal of achieving national accreditation for this nursing program, we rallied the BSN faculty and staff in record time. We communicated our challenges to the students and we made a plan. We applied for candidacy in April.

In August, we submitted a 1,000-page document for candidacy to the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission Inc. In September, we learned Edison was approved as a candidate for accreditation by NLNAC — a critical step in our accreditation journey.

I recently attended a NLNAC workshop in Chicago to help us prepare for our second step, the self study.

This process takes a considerable amount of time and effort as it includes a thorough evaluation of the program and often takes two years to complete.

In October, we submitted the application for a site visit.

A few weeks ago, we received notification that the site visit was granted. The visitation team from NLNAC will be conducting the accreditation site visit for the bachelor's of science in nursing program on March 13-15.

This is remarkable as this is outside of their normal spring cycle visits, which typically end in February. This extension was requested to allow our team as much time as possible to complete the Self Study.

(Page 2 of 2)

The BSN faculty and staff are working very hard to achieve this goal.

Increasing the number of nurses in Southwest Florida with a bachelor's degree is a priority. As chair of The Future of Nursing Task Force — Southwest Florida, I know it has a goal of implementing the Institute of Medicine recommendation that 80 percent of all nurses in the country have a bachelor's degree by 2020.

Edison State College is the No. 1 producer of registered nurses in SW Florida and we are proud of our record.

Our students pass the state and national board exams well above state and national averages, exceeding a 93 percent pass rate. Our graduates serve as nurses at Lee Memorial Health System, NCH Healthcare System, Fawcett Memorial Hospital, home-health and long-term care facilities, hospice and other organizations in Southwest Florida.

Edison celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2012. It has been and remains a cornerstone of this community.

The faculty, administration, staff and students continue to support our college during all of its challenges. The accreditation process has made our nursing programs even stronger and the faculty more committed to doing what they do best: Educating nurses to care for you and your family when you need them most.

Denise McNulty is Interim Director of Nursing at Edison State College. She also co-chairs The Future of Nursing Task Force — Southwest Florida.

Ft. Myers News Press

Lee, Collier county educators among those searching for system fix

10:29 PM, Nov. 28, 2011

Written by Dave Breitenstein

The same can be said of the economy of a region in which the education system and workforce aren't aligned.

Southwest Florida's key players are headed to the mechanic to begin repairs of a disconnect between K-12, higher education and industry. The Alliance of Educational Leaders, which includes five school superintendents and five college chiefs, met Monday to begin identifying strategies that will produce the type of education, graduates and employees vital to a thriving economy.

"If we don't do this and don't get to the root causes of our problem, we will have failed a generation," said Charlotte County Superintendent Doug Whittaker.

Time is wasting.

James Moore, director of the Fort Myers Regional Partnership, said prospective businesses won't relocate here without ample employee pools already in place. Existing businesses can't expand for the same reason.

"They want a qualified workforce now," Moore said.

The lack of a highly educated, skilled workforce has kept Southwest Florida's economy dependent upon tourism and construction, and the area had no backup industries when both fields sputtered.

School districts, though, have been ramping up programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to enhance students' skills for a global economy, and Gov. Rick Scott is proposing state universities shift more of their funds toward STEM programs. The most popular major at FGCU is biology, and FGCU's engineering program has grown so quickly that it recently became its own academic college.

Monday's conversation was first time alliance members convened since The News-Press Market Watch Education Summit on Oct. 5, when panels explored the region's education challenges and possible paths for a brighter future. The alliance was tasked with exploring solutions and mapping an all-encompassing plan that aligns education with employer needs. That likely will take months, if not years, to complete.

Lee County Superintendent Joseph Burke believes businesses suffer from brain drain as talented youths pursue college degrees elsewhere. Studies show many never return.

"That will continue to be true if the best and brightest graduates continue to leave the area," said Burke, who suggested some type of incentive system could lessen the problem.

Among 23 Academic All-Stars as recognized by The News-Press in 2011, 13 were remaining in Florida for college. And of those, just five were staying in Southwest Florida.

Burke and Marshall Bower, executive director of the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, are restarting a principal-for-a-day program to give business leaders an inside look at education. Collier County recently resumed its program.

"Every time we open the eyes of someone else, whether it's a parent, legislator or business leader, it will help," Collier Superintendent Kamela Patton said.

Glades County Superintendent Wayne Aldrich said it's up to teachers, parents and business leaders to change the mindset in Tallahassee, one that is so focused on testing and remediation that instruction often gets lost.

Susan McManus, president of the Education Foundation of Collier County, hopes school districts don't forget a crucial element as they try to enact change.

"The parent is probably the greatest way we're going to change student achievement," McManus said.

NW FL Daily News

Teachers wear bracelets to raise awareness about new evaluation criteria

November 27, 2011 9:56 PM

Katie Tammen

Some educators in Okaloosa County are sporting a new accessory to raise awareness about changing teacher evaluation systems.

For the last month or so, the Okaloosa County Education Association has been passing out red rubber bracelets with a complex mathematical formula on them. That formula is part of what will be used to determine how much a teacher gets paid beginning in the 2012-13 school year.

"What we really found out was nobody ... knew what the formula was even though the state had put it out," said teachers union President Karen Peek.

OCEA director Greg Butler came up with the idea for the bracelets to help raise awareness about the new evaluation process and to show just how complicated it is.

The so-called "value added model" uses student test scores in reading and math over a period of time to determine how effective a teacher is.

One of the problems is that any teacher who teaches an FCAT subject will have the formula applied to determine part of their pay, even if they don't teach reading or math.

Peek, for example, who teaches fifth grade science, will have a portion of her pay determined not by how well her students perform in the science portion of the test, but how well they perform on the math and reading sections.

"Few teachers are going to be paid based on their (own) performance," Peek said. "I constantly get (from teachers), 'That's not fair.'"

The formula was unveiled several months ago as part of Senate Bill 736, which changed teacher evaluation and pay systems.

Peek said the bracelets aren't the result of anger, but are intended just to get people talking about the formula.

"It's so ridiculous that you can't even hardly generate anger," Peek said.

Peek said teachers hope to get more people to wear the bracelets after the first of the year to help ensure that others recognize the formula for what it is.

"That's all it is about — it's about awareness," Peek said. "We're not trying to be positive or negative."

Sun-Sentinel

Schools slipping on African and African-American history lessons

Palm Beach County educators seek to expand focus

By Marc Freeman, Sun Sentinel

8:24 PM EST, November 28, 2011

In most Palm Beach County high schools this fall, students are studying African and African-American history in elective honors classes.

But those lessons aren't taught in each elementary and middle school, putting the school district out of compliance with a 1994 state law requiring the content in all classrooms, School Board members and administrators say.

"There's no school that I'm aware of that is infusing the African [experience] in all subjects as the law demands," said board member Debra Robinson, who is black and has been battling the district on the issue during her 11 years in office.

Officials say they are working on a few strategies to expand the teaching of African-American studies, yet they concede it's going to take more time. The state doesn't actively enforce the law, leaving the matter up to each school system. The district is making it a higher priority following a recent discussion by the board.

"We're going to get it back going again," said Cathy Pressey, a veteran educator who recently took over the role of planning Palm Beach County schools' programs in African and African-American, Latino, and gender studies.

In September, the School Board voted 5-2 to reject Robinson's proposal to provide \$1,000 in special pay for one teacher at each school to coordinate African and African-American lessons.

The board majority said it could not support what would have been a \$200,000 hit to the budget, presented at the last minute. Still, all board members agreed the administration should find a way to achieve the same results without the financial commitment.

"Apparently, the board does not understand the importance of teaching history," Robinson said recently.

Helping to apply pressure is the local Coalition for Black Student Achievement.

LaTanzia Jackson, the group's adult chairwoman, said African and African-American studies were stuck with a lower profile in recent years because the program had been lumped in the district's multicultural education department.

Jackson says she's optimistic the recent attention will make a difference, although she's concerned many teachers have not been properly trained on the curriculum and won't be able to properly teach it.

The state law requires that all teachers in all subjects and grade levels cover African and African-American History. This is to include "the history of African peoples before the conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society."

Or, in Robinson's words: "We need to tell the entire story."

District teachers have access to curriculum materials for all disciplines, adjusted as needed for each grade. For example, a middle school language arts teacher can lead a reading exercise by having a class review "writings of enslaved persons."

In a district report, officials acknowledge that the "success or failure" of the effort falls on the administration. It also warns a number of educators may resist the direction to "infuse" African and African-American studies in the coursework.

Teachers of the semester-long elective courses in the high schools are far more engaged in the topic, as are the students who are enrolled, said Pressey, who taught it at Palm Beach Lakes High in West Palm Beach in recent years.

"I've seen it change students' self-esteem and motivation to learn," she said.

Pressey says each school once had a voluntary teacher "point person" who would encourage and assist with the teaching of African and African-American history. She is hoping to update those contacts before Winter Break, and notify the School Board early next year.

"Everything's a work in progress," Pressey said.

St. Pete Times

Pinellas School Board removes 'interim' from superintendent's title

By Rebecca Catalanello, Times Staff Writer

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

LARGO — Don't call John Stewart interim superintendent of the Pinellas County School District any more. School Board members on Monday decided to drop the "interim" — signaling their approval of his leadership over the 100,000-student district.

Less than three months after taking the reins from ousted school chief Julie Janssen, Stewart has charmed his bosses with his low-key, take-charge style, moving forward with complicated initiatives that prior to his leadership often seemed to move at a snail's pace.

On Monday, Stewart and his staff briefed the board on the details of two such proposals: a planned reorganization of the district's communications office and the final tweaks in a student rezoning plan scheduled for a board vote next week.

"We couldn't wish for or want more," said Terry Krassner, the board member who requested Stewart's title change during a board workshop.

Stewart, a former Polk County superintendent who went on to lead and retire from the Florida High School Athletic Association, has agreed to stay in Pinellas a total of 18 months, but said he wants to return to retirement after that. On Monday he said he was honored by the board's decision, but said it made "no difference" to him either way.

He is serving on an open-ended, \$12,000 a month contract. Board chairwoman Robin Wikle said the title change is just a matter of semantics and doesn't require a board vote.

In other business:

- Administrators laid out the final tweaks on a controversial student rezoning and assignment plan up for a board vote Dec. 6. The plan calls for a redrawing of school zones at 27 of the district's 63 elementary schools. It also requires some students currently attending out-of-zone schools to return to their neighborhood schools.

In all, according to numbers presented by deputy superintendent Jim Madden and his staff, 2,183 kids will be required to change schools. These include 1,248 students who are attending a nonzoned school due to the fact that their families moved. Another 1,716 students who are currently attending out-of-zone campuses because of open enrollment or because they were denied space at their zoned schools could be allowed to remain at their current schools, if their parents apply by Jan. 31.

- Stewart presented a plan to reorganize the district's communications department, whittling it from a nine-person office to seven. Stewart said the move comes in response to an external audit released this summer. "I realized that in order to get better results," he said, "we would need to do more than rearrange chairs. We would need to have a communications reform."

Andrea Zahn, the district's communications director since 2006, announced her plans to retire. Under Stewart's plan, her \$77,741 position will essentially be eliminated in lieu of a "director of strategic communications" job, which would be filled by Donna Winchester, a former St. Petersburg Times reporter who joined the district in 2009. It is unclear what, if any, cost savings the reorganization would yield, Stewart said.

Flagler Live

Florida Universities Respond to Rick Scott's Inquisition With a Massive Document Dump

November 28, 2011

Time for Rick Scott to do a little homework about Florida universities.

Public university leaders, through thousands of pages of answers that include backup academic studies and appendixes, have replied to Gov. Rick Scott's request to outline what the schools are doing to ensure graduates meet the need of Florida employers.

The presidents of the state's 11 public universities were given until last week to respond to Scott's Oct. 13 email sent to each school. And as diverse as each campus is, the schools replied using a variety of formats, from secured online pages to discs and pages of bound volumes.

"We are continuously strengthening the exchange of information between higher education and industry, and your work with Enterprise Florida and through the Florida (Department of Economic Opportunity) can be an avenue of deeper conversation," Chancellor Frank Brogan, speaking for all university presidents, stated in his response to Scott.

Scott has targeted higher education reform for the 2012 session, from professor tenure to a focus on courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the STEM core desired for a high-tech future.

The governor's Office of Policy and Budget is compiling the responses.

"We will let you know what the next steps are once all the information supplied from the universities has been reviewed," said Jackie Schutz, deputy press secretary.

Most of the university presidents highlighted the efforts of their schools to focus on the STEM majors.

"With its overall economic impact of \$8.76 billion annually, the 106,000 jobs provided directly and indirectly through University operations, its research operations and the spin-off companies created based on the new intellectual property, UF is an important driver of the Florida economy," the University of Florida concluded in its 752-page response.

"In the midst of this large-scale activity, however, UF does not forget the needs of individual citizens. The University provides exemplary educational opportunities on its main campus in Gainesville and around the state at all levels: bachelor, master, doctoral and professional."

Wilson Bradshaw, Florida Gulf Coast University president, pointed to a U.S. News story that reported the school's STEM graduates have increased 1,000 percent in the past decade.

"Likewise, the number of FGCU students majoring in STEM disciplines has grown from 1,875 just two years ago to 2,286 this year," Bradshaw stated.

James Ammons, Florida A&M University president, highlighted that Florida has epitomized creative and innovative programs as well as science and technology through the economic engines of Walt Disney and NASA.

"Florida A&M University has been a part of the innovative, STEM-driven economy," Ammons stated in a letter to Scott.

Scott, using Agency for Workforce Innovation numbers, has estimated that Florida will need at least 120,000 workers in the science and math fields through 2018.

Judy Genshaft, University of South Florida president, echoed the sentiments expressed by most presidents in their responses.

"USF wholeheartedly supports your efforts to create high-paying jobs for Floridians and we see ourselves as a key ally of yours in that fight," she stated.

Scott's questions seek: what the universities have done in the last three years to ensure graduates are meeting the needs of employers; information stating whether graduates are able to find jobs in Florida; whether there are ways to measure student success after graduation; goals for the highest-paid employees for the past three years; and how schools measure program costs and revenue.

"I believe we responded to each question you posed as thoughtfully and deliberately as possible," wrote Judith Bense, University of West Florida president. "The process helped us further identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. For instance, like many other universities in the nation, UWF struggles with the best way to track graduates after they leave our institution."

The New College of Florida response stated that the school tracks results from the Job Outlook survey conducted annually by the National Association of Colleges and Employers and the employers' survey commissioned by Association for American Colleges and Universities.

St. Pete Times

Ousted FAMU band director says he fought to end hazing

By Katie Sanders, Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

TALLAHASSEE — Ousted last week as director of Florida A&M University's marching band, Julian White made a case for reinstatement Monday, saying he worked tirelessly during his tenure to prevent the kind of hazing rituals that investigators believe led to a drum major's death after a football game.

"I feel very comfortable that I did everything I could to eradicate hazing," White said in a news conference at his attorney's office.

Robert Champion, 26, of Atlanta was found unresponsive on a bus outside the band's Orlando hotel Nov. 19 after vomiting and complaining he could not breathe. Earlier, the Marching 100 had performed at the annual Florida Classic game against Bethune-Cookman.

Officials say it could take up to three months to determine a cause of death.

FAMU president James Ammons fired White on Wednesday, citing his failure to stop hazing within the band.

"He said, 'Doc, I don't know what other way to put it, this is it for you,' " White said. "He said, 'You can resign, or you can be terminated.' "

White told reporters that he had asked supervisors for help with hazing over the years. He wanted more students suspended or expelled from school.

"Sometimes I feel as though I'm out there by myself," White said, "and by that I mean, you know, if I've given you the names, do something about it. ... If some strong actions had been taken, then Robert Champion may well be alive now."

When Champion was pronounced dead at the hospital, White asked if he could be alone with Champion, one of six drum majors.

"I asked the medics if they would allow me a few minutes, that I could just go in and touch Robert, and see Robert, just as a reminder to me how tragic life can be sometimes," he said.

Then came the hardest part, White said: calling Champion's parents.

White said he will speak at Champion's funeral in Atlanta on Wednesday at the request of his parents, who said in a separate news conference Monday that they intend to sue FAMU.

"We are confident from what we've learned that hazing was a part of his death. We've got to expose this culture and eradicate it," said their attorney, Christopher Chestnut. "There's a pattern and practice of covering up this culture."

White maintains he made ending hazing a priority even before he took over as director. Band members sit through hazing workshops during orientation and often hear speeches from top FAMU officials warning of the legal consequences, he said. Plus, each member must sign a pledge against hazing.

White has suspended 100 students over the years for hazing, he said, and word is routinely sent to the president and campus police chief, among other administrators, he said.

Two weeks before the Florida Classic, he suspended 26 students for hazing activities after the school's homecoming game. He fielded angry calls from parents who wanted their children on the field, but he thought it was worth it. He thought hazing would be over.

"I was taking something away from those students that they honestly desire so much," he said of the Classic.

Ammons suspended the band last week for the first time in its history, as well as all other performance ensembles in the music department. White said he supports that decision.

His firing prompted about 100 students to protest Monday morning on campus. Students held posters that read "Save Music" and chanted, "We want Doc!"

White joined the university in 1972 and took over the band in 1998. Nine years earlier, as associate director of bands, he wrote to then-director William Foster about how the hazing death of a Morehouse College fraternity pledge could happen at FAMU if drastic measures were not taken to curb similar practices there. He warned that prolonged hazing could "destroy the band."

"It would be very difficult for the University and the band should someone become killed or hurt because of hazing," he wrote in a memo included in a packet to Ammons.

White's attorney, Charles "Chuck" Hobbs II, called White's dismissal "completely ludicrous" given White's efforts over two decades to discourage hazing.

A reporter asked White on Monday if he felt Ammons made him a scapegoat for Champion's death. He said yes. He did not say Ammons should be removed from his post,

though at least one group — the Florida Civil Rights Association — has called for Ammons' removal.

A FAMU alumnus, Ammons inherited a university at risk of losing its accreditation when he took the top job in 2007. State audits chronicled years of mismanagement, including \$2.7 million worth of missing supplies like computer equipment.

The chairman of the university's Board of Trustees has expressed confidence in Ammons. "He has responded appropriately to this tragic situation," Solomon Badger said in a statement.

Tallahassee Democrat

Marching 100 out of step

Opinion

November 29, 2011

Hazing will end only when students reject these cultural rituals

The recent tragedy that has engulfed Florida A&M University and the Marching 100 with the untimely death of Robert Champion is very difficult for the Champion family, the Marching 100 and FAMU alumni around the globe. We are all hurting from the loss of Mr.

Champion and we all feel the pain that has ascended on the FAMU family.

I learned of Robert's death in the early morning hours after attending the Florida Classic in Orlando.

Since that time, I have followed the numerous articles and news stories that have emanated from this tragic event, and feel compelled to speak as a proud FAMU alumnus, a former member of the Marching 100, and a mourner of the death of Mr. Champion.

While I am confident in the FAMU leadership team in handling this immediate crisis, I am compelled to also become involved in fixing this persistent problem both in the Marching 100 and at FAMU in general.

Although I understand why Dr. Julian White was terminated for ultimate responsibility, I want to impress that Dr. White and his staff have tried everything in their power to stop hazing in the band. He has constantly preached to both freshman and upperclassman that they are not to engage in hazing. Further, Dr. White has also made each member commit to not hazing or participating in hazing.

The band staff has consistently shown that they are serious about hazing by kicking people out of the band for reported acts of hazing throughout the entire year. The university also has an extensive process of reviewing each hazing incident and sending them through the FAMU Police Department to investigate.

Though these controls were in place, they were not enough to stop the death of Robert Champion. The band was last reconstituted in 1998, Dr.

White's first year at the helm, with a majority of upperclassmen members being kicked out of the band. By the next year, there was once again hazing in the band. No amount of punishment or controls have been able to cede the vestiges of hazing in the band, and I want to assert that none of these will stop hazing. Hazing must stop at the level in which it is originated: with students and alumni.

As a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, I know that many fraternities and sororities face the same challenges that is found in the Marching 100. National organizations of the nine Black Greek Letter Organizations have put in many controls ranging from risk-management certification to zero-tolerance policies on hazing for both aspirants and members.

Though the punishment for this hazing is severe, it has not been enough to eliminate hazing in these more than 100-year old organizations.

In my experience, part of the problem is that the aspiring members want to be hazed as much as the current members want to haze them. It is not only a part of a compelling tradition, but also a part of the sentiment that one must go through these rituals to be truly "made."

Further, those who do not engage in these rituals are ostracized for their decision to not engage in such acts. These students are shunned by those who chose to go through the process, and are seen as not a true member.

Students come to the band camps knowing they want to participate in these rituals and some even seek out the opportunity.

Though the punishments in this case will be severe both by the institution and the legal system, I can assure you these will not cause hazing to cease in the Marching 100 or at FAMU. In fact, it will cause hazing to go further underground, and the university will have no way to know whether or not hazing is occurring. While the law in Florida only punishes the hazer, the person being hazed is let off the hook for what is a mutual decision to pledge. Further, it should be noted that the majority of the incidents of hazing do not happen at band practices, sectional rehearsals, or any place that is policed or patrolled by faculty and staff. These events take place at off-campus locations, and in the confines of the places that only students who participate in hazing can detail. Students ensure that faculty and staff are not present.

It does not matter if we are talking about the hazing that happens in fraternities and sororities, modeling troupes, student government, service organizations or the Marching 100. Hazing is an endemic part of the culture at FAMU and many other universities — especially HBCUs — across the country.

The way to fix hazing at FAMU will not be only through the use of proactive institutional controls and reactive punishments. Instead, hazing will end only with a change in the very consciousness of students to not engage in these acts. This is something that cannot be legislated, controlled or punished into existence. It can only come by changing the culture of the students themselves, and the social pressures that encourage and promote hazing among all youth — African-American youth in particular. I very much oppose the solution that has been asserted by Dr. Walter Kimbrough, president of Philander Smith College, and others.

The way to fix this problem is not by suspending the entire marching band program at FAMU, which is filled with a plethora of students who did not take part in hazing activities.

Kimbrough and others simply want to suspend the band because of its prestige and to make an example out of it, but this does little to solve the systemic problem of hazing across the country. Severe punishments have yet to end or prevent hazing in Black Greek Letter Organizations and it will not do so in the Marching Band at FAMU.

— John Michael Lee Jr., is policy director for the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center in New York.

Lee earned a Ph.D. from New York University, and his undergraduate degree from Florida A&M University.

Tallahassee Democrat

White: 'I did everything I could'

Fired band director says he warned of danger

By Jennifer Portman Democrat senior writer

November 29, 2011

Ousted Florida A&M band director Julian White publicly spoke out for the first time Monday, defending his decades-long efforts to fight hazing within the famed Marching 100 and decrying his firing last week following the death of drum major Robert Champion.

"I wish we were not here now," White said with his wife, Dennine, and daughter Tonja White-Mathews by his side at a news conference at the office of his attorney, Chuck Hobbs. "I took the necessary steps that this tragedy could have been avoided."

White, who has taught at FAMU for nearly 40 years and has led the band since 1998, said he made top university officials aware of the band's persistent problem of hazing, but that President James H. Ammons and others failed to take appropriate universitywide disciplinary action. White is fighting his termination by Ammons, which is effective Dec. 22.

"If some strong action had been taken, Robert Champion may be alive now," White said.

Champion died the night of Nov. 19 in Orlando following the Florida Classic football game. Law enforcement officials, who continue to investigate, say hazing was involved in events leading up to his death. The week before the game, White suspended 26 band members for their involvement in two other suspected hazing incidents that occurred after FAMU's October homecoming game.

"This is a very difficult time for members of Florida A&M University's band, its faculty, staff, administrators and all students," said White, who sat at Champion's side before he died and called his parents with the news. "This kind of thing has a negative effect on all."

White said Champion's parents, who plan to file a wrongful death lawsuit against FAMU, have asked that he speak at the 26-year-old's funeral in Dekalb, Ga., on Wednesday. In a separate news conference in Atlanta on Monday, Pam and Robert Champion Sr. said they hope their son's death will help bring an end to hazing.

"This needs to stop," Pam Champion said. "No one wants to be standing in our shoes."

The couple's attorney, Christopher Chestnut of Gainesville, said hazing is a culture of "don't ask, don't tell," and that the university did not do enough to combat it.

"It certainly has been a culture that has been protected at FAMU," said Chestnut, who plans soon to file a required six-month notice of intent to sue. "This lawsuit isn't about money. We need answers ... (Champion's) legacy will be one of purpose, because he died in foolishness. That purpose is the end of hazing."

Anti-hazing 'fanatic'

The week before the Classic, top university officials met with band members twice, admonishing them to not engage in any hazing activities similar to those that occurred following homecoming. Two days before the game, White sent an email to Marching 100 alumni, informing them that band members had been suspended and urging those who may have been involved in "subversive activities" to "re-evaluate your association with the band ... and not engage in activities that would bring dishonor to the Florida A&M University Band."

Documents show White has long flagged top administrative officials about the problem of hazing within the band. Emails to Ammons, his predecessors and their leadership staff show he repeatedly informed them when students were involved in alleged hazing incidents and suspended from the band. Anti-hazing workshops were conducted with band students, all incoming freshmen were required to sign a no-hazing pledge and everyone was warned that hazing would result in the loss of band scholarships and permanent termination from the band.

White described himself as an anti-hazing "fanatic," who would drive to campus in the middle of the night if he heard of any hazing activity.

"To protect my kids I do things out of the ordinary," he said at the news conference. "I feel very comfortable that I did everything I could to eradicate hazing." Despite his efforts, White said he was unable to completely end it. Over the years, he said he suspended about 100 students from the band. In some cases, he gave students a second chance. He said "98 percent" of those students did not disappoint him. A few, however, did not learn.

"This is just a culture that kids nowadays engage in," he said.

White, a FAMU graduate and former drum major, said that as a freshman he was made to wear a paper hat and eat last, but never was subjected to harsh physical or mental treatment.

"I never would have allowed that to happen to me," he said. "I would not allow myself to be humiliated."

Last week, Ammons indefinitely suspended all instrumental performances involving music department students. While there are no more football games this year, White, who supports the suspension, said the sanction is still meaningful.

The band now will miss several upcoming engagements, including a prestigious event at Carnegie Hall, he said, and "it puts a smear on the band."

The end of the 100?

Ammons last week also created a special independent task force, led by former Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth and Quincy Police Chief Walt McNeil, a former

Tallahassee police chief and state corrections and juvenile justice secretary, to investigate hazing within the band and recommend policy changes.

However, White's attorney, Hobbs, said Monday members of the Florida NAACP question the objectivity of the task force and plan to ask Florida Board of Governors' Chancellor Frank Brogan to look into the matter.

Solomon Badge, chairman of FAMU's Board of Trustees, said it's likely there will be an emergency meeting of the board.

"I'm very concerned about the reputation of the university," he said. "I think everyone is."

The hundreds of pages of documents provided by White to university officials to prove his anti-hazing efforts show those working to end the practice face an entrenched culture going back decades.

In an October 1989 letter from White to longtime band director William P. Foster following the hazing death of a Morehouse University fraternity member, White warned that similar incidents could occur within FAMU's band. White said his letter also was timely because of the fall tradition of "taking the freshmen over" — a practice Foster told band members didn't exist, but in fact, persisted — and urged Foster to form a task force to look at ways to deal with the problem.

"Our incidents are few, but nevertheless, hazing and harassment continues to be a problem," White wrote. "It would be very difficult for the University and the band should someone become killed or hurt because of hazing."

Such an incident would embarrass the university, White continued, damage Foster's reputation and hurt recruitment of quality students.

"In the long run, it could destroy the band," he wrote.

On Monday, White said he was afraid his dire warning more than 20 years ago may be coming to fruition — the end of the Marching 100.

"The future of the Marching 100 depends on what the administration does from this point on," White said.

Tallahassee Democrat

FAMU's Julian White deserves full airing of his anti-hazing efforts

Bob Gabordi

November 29, 2011

If Florida A&M University President James H. Ammons was unaware of recent hazing incidents involving the Marching 100 band, it was only because he must not have read his mail.

Last Wednesday, Ammons fired Director of Bands Julian White following the death of drum major Robert Champion after he was pummeled on a band bus and died in Orlando following the Florida Classic football game.

In firing White, a FAMU graduate and a member of the music faculty for nearly 40 years, Ammons said, "I did not feel there was competence in reporting allegations of hazing within the Department of Music and the Marching 100."

During a press conference last week called to announce a special investigation, Ammons seemed surprised by a question from our reporter Jennifer Portman on whether it was true that up to 30 students had recently been suspended on allegations related to hazing.

Ammons turned to White, who was standing behind the president, for guidance in answering the question. White nodded in the affirmative, saying "Yes, it is true." Ammons then responded affirmatively to Portman's question.

(A link to the video can be found on tallahassee.

com. The exchange comes at about the 7:20 mark on the video.) But documents released by White show that he had reported this incident to FAMU police and to Ammons.

On Nov. 16, three days before Champion was beaten on the Marching 100 bus, Ammons had been copied on a memo from White to University Police Investigator John Cotton offering detail on the hazing incidents that resulted in the students' suspensions.

Further, on Nov. 10, White copied Ammons and University Police Chief Calvin Ross on letters he wrote individually to each student he suspended based on allegations of

hazing.

White said he first informed the president on Nov. 8, so that would mean he was told at least three different times before the press conference about the incident Portman was asking about.

So why didn't the president know the answer to the reporter's question?

Put another way, why did he act as though he didn't know the answer?

Let me be clear in saying I'm not defending White or suggesting the university was wrong in firing him. I am questioning whether White is right in suggesting he is being unfairly made into a scapegoat. Further, and more on point, his claims deserve a fair airing, and will get one, if not by the university then almost certainly by the courts.

In fact, White released dozens of documents – a stack several inches thick – in support of his contention that he has been a lone wolf in battling hazing in the band and that his pleas for help were met with “reckless indifference” by his superiors.

His attorney, Chuck Hobbs of Tallahassee, told us in an interview that White has been an “aggressive anti-hazing leader” and attempts by the university to paint him otherwise is “patently offensive.”

The investigation announced by Ammons last week is being headed by distinguished co-chairs, former Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth and Quincy Police Chief Walt McNeil, the former secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and former Tallahassee police chief.

But in announcing the investigation, apart from separate criminal investigations that are under way by the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the president announced the purpose was to look at the Marching 100's “policy and procedures” and at what needs to happen to fix problems, reporting back “to the university and me.” But White has presented enough reason to suspect the investigation needs a broader mission; it should report to the Board of Trustees, not to the president, on whether there was “reckless indifference” and if so, by whom.

If the university refuses, perhaps the Board of Governors or the Legislature need to step up and do their own investigations. I can't help but wonder how much the Florida A&M board knew, and if Ammons had informed them of ongoing hazing concerns, why didn't the board didn't step up and do more .

Hazing has been ongoing for decades and now that a young man has died, responsibility needs to fall where it belongs. The university owes that to the Champion family and to all the students it has allowed to be hurt, physically and emotionally, for too long.

— **Bob Gabordi is executive editor of the Tallahassee Democrat and Tallahassee.com. He can be reached on his blog on Tallahassee.com, through email at bgabordi@tallahassee.com. On Twitter, he's [@bgabordi](https://twitter.com/bgabordi). You can also find links to his blogs on Facebook or write P.O. Box 990, Tallahassee, FL 32302**

US News: Top 10 Universities With the Most Undergraduate Students

For students hoping to join the crowd, these 10 schools enroll more than 437,000 undergrads combined.

By [Kelsey Sheehy](#)

November 29, 2011 [RSS Feed](#) [Print](#)

The U.S. News Short List, separate from our overall rankings, is a regular series that magnifies individual data points in hopes of providing students and parents a way to find which undergraduate or graduate programs excel or have room to grow in specific areas. Be sure to explore [The Short List: College](#) and [The Short List: Grad School](#) to find data that matters to you in your college or grad school search.

Universities span the spectrum from cozy and personal to expansive and diverse, and finding your best fit can be difficult.

Small colleges can offer more direct contact with professors and unique camaraderie among classmates, but large universities are able to lure students with cutting-edge research facilities, far-reaching alumni networks, and a broad range of academic and extracurricular programs.

[Get 10 tips for choosing the [right college](#).]

U.S. News surveys more than 1,800 colleges and universities annually, and 1,338 of the public and private schools ranked in [Best Colleges](#) 2012 reported student population data for fall 2010 to U.S. News. The average undergraduate population among those 1,338 schools is 5,700 students, but [Arizona State University](#) far exceeds the national average. That institution enrolled 56,562 undergraduates in the fall of 2010, the most of any school surveyed.

While the undergraduate population at both [Pennsylvania State University](#) and [Michigan State University](#) shrunk slightly between 2009 and 2010, the other eight largest schools saw their numbers grow, reflecting a trend of increased enrollment at colleges across the country.

[Learn how to [tailor your college applications](#) to specific schools.]

If you're hoping to choose your new circle of friends from a pool of more than 30,000 undergraduates, look no further than the 10 schools listed in the table below. Each of these schools is a [national university](#), and is among those with the largest undergraduate populations in 2010 among all the colleges and universities reporting student population data to U.S. News. For-profit institutions were not considered for this list.

Schools that were designated by U.S. News as Unranked were not considered for this report. U.S. News did not calculate a numerical ranking for Unranked programs because the program did not meet certain criteria that U.S. News requires to be numerically ranked.

School name	Undergraduate student enrollment	U.S. News rank
Arizona State University	59,562	132
University of Central Florida	47,580	177
Ohio State University—Columbus	42,082	55
Texas A&M University—College Station	39,148	58
Pennsylvania State University—University Park	38,594	45
University of Texas—Austin	38,420	45
Michigan State University	36,058	71
Florida International University	33,786	RNP*
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities	33,607	68
University of Florida	32,660	58

*RNP denotes an institution that is ranked in the bottom one fourth of its rankings category. U.S. News calculates a rank for the school but has decided not to publish it.

Don't see your school in the top 10? Access the U.S. News [College Compass](#) to find admissions data, complete rankings, and much more.

U.S. News surveyed more than 1,800 colleges and universities for our 2011 survey of undergraduate programs. Schools self-reported a myriad of data regarding their academic programs and the makeup of their student body, among other areas, making U.S. News's data the most accurate and detailed collection of college facts and figures of its kind. While the data comes from the schools themselves, these lists have no influence over U.S. News's rankings of [Best Colleges](#) or [Best Graduate Schools](#).

Deborah Higgins

Information Specialist
Florida Department of Education

Office of Communications

325 W. Gaines Street, Room 1524

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

850-245-0413

Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your e-mail communications may be subject to public disclosure.