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CHEYNEY UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Testimony of Kishore Owusu

Pennsylvania Education Committee & Legislative Black Caucus Joint Public Hearing on HBCU Financial Support/Resources

Good afternoon, Chair Schweyer (Majority Chair), Chair Topper (Minority Chair), Chair Nelson (PLBC Chair) and Members of the House Education Committee and PA Legislative Black Caucus. My name is Kishore Owusu and I am a graduating senior majoring in Biology with a concentration in Pre-medicine. I currently have the honor of serving as outgoing Student government President and Student Trustee on Cheyney's Council of Trustees. To the Chair Schweyer, Chair Topper, Chair Nelson and Members of the House Education Committee and PA Legislative Black Caucus, I am in support of an increase in funding for the State System. At Any University, the main priority for the school's administration is "what's in the best interest of the students?". Keeping this in mind, an increase in funding overall goes to helping students by making it possible for some of the issues they face to be fixed or improved. As a result, there will be an increase in both retention and enrollment, two major concerns for universities in these times.

Keystone Scholarship

- This scholarship allows individuals to be given the opportunity to attend Cheyney University without any financial burdens which is a great cause of concern for those coming from disadvantaged/ low socioeconomic backgrounds.
 - An increase in funding allows for more deserving students to make use of this scholarship meaning there will be an increase in both enrollment and retention at Cheyney.
 - As a recipient of the Keystone scholarship, I can focus on my studies without having to think about how I will be paying for my education. As a result, I have been able to maintain a 4.0 gpa as well as be active both on and off campus. Therefore, I believe an increase in funding leads to better academic performance for all students.

Conferences/Programs

- Conferences are a great way for students to grow in their respective fields while also acting as ambassadors for the University beyond the state the University is located in. Growth cannot happen if you believe that everything you need is within the borders of your reach.

- Student leadership conference for HBCU students in leadership roles. It offers workshops and opportunities for these leaders to learn and grow before eventually bringing back all the collaborative concepts back to their respective campuses.
- As a participant in the 2023 NASAP conference, I learned a great deal of information and concepts that I was not familiar with and implemented some on campus. The sharing of ideas is beneficial for Cheyney's student leaders. However, only a portion of the student leader population was able to attend due to funding issues. As a result, many of them missed out on the opportunity to grow and make their campus a better place.

Royal Court

- The University's royal courts act as ambassadors for the University beyond the scope of school visits. They also attend conferences and compete in pageantry that allows for increased visibility for the school. These pageants can be costly however, the benefits are worth it not only in the growth of the members of the court but also for the impact these members make on the individuals they come across during their travels.
- This year I had the opportunity to compete in many royal court related conferences including the Mister HBCU competition which was fruitful as I grew as a leader and had a great impact on the students, I was fortunate enough to meet. During the school trips, these students who either came from disadvantaged backgrounds or were in the minority were filled with happiness and excitement to see people in such important roles at their respective institutions and they were also made aware of the different institutions available for their attendance. In this sense their worlds were expanded, and the possibilities increased for them.

Cheyney/76ers/MIT program

- A partnership program was made available to various students to work with graduate students from MIT on problems facing the 76ers marketing team. During this program students were able to grow in their data analytical skills while also networking and making new connections for growth in respective fields. With an increase in funding more opportunities/partnerships with certain entities/organizations can be made possible.

Increased diversity regarding majors and curriculums offered.

- An increase in budget allows Cheyney to hire professors who teach courses that fall under their curriculum of expertise which in addition allows for majors that were placed on moratorium to return. This will allow for an increase in majors offered leading to increased retention and enrollment.
- Better selection pool in relation to quality of hired professors.