UNIVERSITY SENATE OF THE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH VISITS CAMPUS
FOR BI-ANNUAL MEETING

On January 22 and 23, B-CU welcomed the University Senate of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to campus for the first of its 2009 biannual meetings, which was the organizing meeting for the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

The University Senate is an elected body of higher education professionals that determines which schools, colleges, universities and theological schools meet the criteria for listing as institutions affiliated with the UMC. It also reviews the 13 United Methodist theological schools and determines which non-United Methodist theological schools are approved for educating potential United Methodist clergy. Established in 1892 as one of the nation’s first accrediting bodies, the University Senate today uses information provided by regional accrediting bodies and conducts its own review of each institution’s program quality, integrity, fiscal sustainability, and church relatedness.

Dr. Jerome King Del Pino, general secretary of the UMC’s General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and Dr. Wanda D. Bingham, interim associate general secretary, led the day-and-a-half long working session which included the election of officers, an orientation for new officers and commission chairs, organizational meetings of the group’s commissions as well as reports and recommendations. One key topic covered was the process for evaluating church-related institutions, including site visits. Each year, a team of University Senate members conducts visits for evaluation purposes at a targeted number of church-related institutions. B-CU’s next site visit is scheduled for 2010.

“We were graciously hosted by President Trudie Kibbe Reed and the faculty, staff, and students of the university,” noted Dr. Bingham. “Many of the senators remarked on the helpful, attentive people who assisted us. We appreciated the warm and gracious greetings and attention we received at your beautiful campus.”

For many of the University Senate members, this was their first visit to Bethune-Cookman University. The 40 participants took a guided tour of campus led by Mr. Ferrier, Mr. DiJust and two current students. The tour started at the gravesite of Dr. Bethune and included stops at the Performing Arts Center and the School of Nursing. The B-CU Chamber Singers and Mr. Earl Williams provided entertainment for the group’s dinner—a performance that moved some viewers to tears.
A NEW U.S. PRESIDENT...
The B-CU Campus Reflects Upon Inauguration Day

“I felt like it was a stepping stone and an inspiration to all, not just African-Americans.”
- Omar Harmon, Student

“It felt like one of the biggest moments in my life as an African-American.”
- Anthony Floyd, Student

“President Obama’s inauguration was very monumental. I was very proud to watch President Barack Obama’s swearing-in as his wife held The Bible and his children watched with joy. I knew that I would live to see this one day!”
- LaVerda Clark, Student

“The day of the Inauguration of President Obama I was filled with hope, love for all and the pride of knowing that change had made it in my life time and for many others. I know that things are not going to be perfect but I also know that he will make it through these tough times. I am proud to call him my president!”
- Justin Mincey, Student

“I felt like it was a new day.”
- Charles Maddox, Student

“I wanted to be with my students that day – it’s the first time 98% of my students voted.”
Dr. Paula McKenzie, Assistant Professor

It was an incredible, historical and memorable event and I’m honored to have witnessed it.”
- Stacy Lopez, Student

“It was amazing to be there in person witnessing people of all races come together for one purpose.”
- Damein Mitchell, Staff

“It felt like the door of the past was closed and the door of the future was being opened. I was also honored to be an African-American. Change has finally come to America!”
- Anisha Berridge, Student

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As the U.S. Senate was clearing away obstacles on Monday for Roland Burris to take his seat in Congress, his daughter, Rolanda, was 1,000 miles away, preparing to welcome her class of underachievers at Judson University.

Rolanda, who turns 45 in March, seemed unaffected by the controversy swirling about her now-nationally famous father in his quest to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President-elect Barack Obama.

Rolanda said she breathed a “big sigh of relief” when she learned her father would have a clear path to the Senate seat despite concerns that the appointment was tainted because it was made by disgraced Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who authorities charge had offered the seat to the highest bidder.

“There was a long pause...a long road...and the fact that (senators knew) my father for who he is...the politician that is within him,” she said. “We were just hoping that the opportunity would present itself to once again be a public servant for the state of Illinois.”

Burris served as Illinois comptroller from 1979 to 1991 and later as attorney general.

Rolanda allowed that having her dad in Washington when Congress is in session is not something she looks forward to. “But it’s not something that is new to us, because when he served in statewide offices, he was in Springfield,” she said.

Judson President Jerry Cain praised Rolanda for her work with Judson students who are struggling academically.

“It’s always easy for us to teach those students who study hard and have natural abilities and make A’s and B’s,” he said. “But Rolanda’s role is to take those (students) who are marginal and make sure they succeed.”

Cain lauded Rolanda’s “amazing patience” and “amazing force” to push these students into a mode of succeeding that he said is necessary for college-level work.

He said Rolanda’s students were admitted to Judson marginally because of weak ACT scores or high school grades that were not strong.

A graduate of Bethune-Cookman College at Daytona Beach, Fla., Rolanda at first dabbled in broadcasting, setting her sights on being a disk jockey. “My air name was Rocky Rollo,” she said, trying to suppress a laugh. “I was doing great things on the soul station for all over Daytona,” Rolanda recalled.

But her role as an intern was cut short, she said, when the morning disk jockey was fired without explanation.

“He was gone...and it just kind of showed me at the time you could be somebody one day and nobody the next,” Rolanda said.

She applied to Judson four years ago for the position of director of academic assistance and was told the position was on hold for a time. But within a short time, she received a call stating the job was hers.

Rolanda said she “definitely” would rule out a bid for political office and expressed gratitude that, in her family, the Burrises could be anything they wanted to be. “My mom pushed that...my dad pushed that...we had to be successful whatever we did.”

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Samuel Heath’s pastor describes him as well-mannered and polite. And then the 21-year-old Bethune-Cookman University senior stands before a microphone. Words fly from his tongue like flames, as history collides with politics all under the domain of God.

“Inspirational.” Stetson University President Doug Lee said after Heath spoke to an audience of 500 inside Stetson’s Rinker Field House on Monday.

The occasion was the annual the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Breakfast. Heath, president of the Bethune-Cookman Student Government Association and an ordained minister, said he is often asked about the relationship between King’s legacy and the ascendancy of Barack Obama, who’s set to be sworn in as the first black president in U.S. history today.

“I’ve heard things like ‘The Dream’ finally becoming reality or ‘The Dream’ finally becoming true,” Heath said. “(But) I like to look at the relationship as it goes from victim to victor. From helpless to help. From a time of imprisonment and the Letter from Birmingham to a time of freedom and now the State of the Union address.”

Heath, Mr. Mainland High School 2005, was on his way to Morehouse College in Atlanta when he changed his mind and decided it would be better for his family to stay home and enroll at Cookman. He had a younger sister and brother, and both his father and mother were imprisoned.

Without much of a relationship with his father and his mother struggling with drugs, Heath relied heavily on his mother’s sister Loretta Moore before her death when he was in 10th grade. He also found a mentor in his godmother, Marsha Bush, who recently died.

Heath refers to the proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child,” in describing his upbringing.

He said, “It is time for us as a people to move beyond blame. Michael Jackson said it best: “I’m talking to the man in the mirror.”

During his fiery, 22-minute speech Monday, Heath posed the question to his audience: What if the dreamer stopped dreaming?

“Because the dreamer never stopped dreaming, we can appreciate the victory,” Heath said. “Because this dreamer, this drum major for Civil Rights, this man who risked everything never stopped dreaming, some of us had an opportunity and a chance.”

“I call myself the Village Child. I really do believe I was part of that village,” he said. “Many women took the opportunity to plant that wisdom in me.”

He remains close with his mother, who he says has done a “180,” and is planning to move with him to Atlanta after his graduation in May. Heath hopes to enroll in a dual law-divinity graduate program at Emory University.

Heath said he wanted to stir audience members -- many of whom were schoolchildren -- into believing in their own greatness. In an interview last week, he said people need to accept their responsibilities.

“The choices we make determine the consequences we accept,”

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B-CU Inspiration Gospel to Perform at Their First Reunion

The Bethune-Cookman University Inspirational Gospel Choir will have its first ever reunion concert Saturday, Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Daytona Deliverance Church of God on Martin Luther King Blvd. in Daytona Beach.

The choir adds to the religious atmosphere of the University and to its many collegiate activities. This organization originally functioned for the sole purpose of furnishing gospel music for Wednesday evening prayer meeting and was organized by the Pentecostal Students. Since that time, its purpose has broadened to include gospel music for recruiting campaigns in order to portray a religious image of the university, as well as raise enthusiasm in prospective students for entering Bethune-Cookman University. The group has grown from approximately 25 originally members in 1966 to the present 40.

For further info please contact Vertellis Kendrick (386) 481-2148 or email at kendriv@cookman.edu.

accolades

Alumnus John H. Williams will be the recipient of the 2008 James E. Stamp Award. Bethune-Cookman University and the B-CU National Alumni Association (NAA) have nominated him to receive the award in Greensboro, NC during the 63rd National Alumni Council/51st National Pre-Alumni Council UNCF Conference on Feb. 6 at the gala alumni recognition banquet that evening.

Williams, a former NAA president, has served on numerous committees and made outstanding contributions to B-CU and the NAA. He also chairs the NAA’s Scholarship Committee, which established an endowed scholarship account in perpetuity on campus in 2007. Williams created a Diamonds Scholarship Program for his Miami-Dade Chapter of the B-CU NAA.

Additionally, Williams and his wife Annette have were major contributors to the University’s Athletic Training Center initiative and have made an additional pledge to the University’s Comprehensive Campaign, totalling $15,000. They also established a large scholarship in their name.

Deborah A. Threet has been selected as B-CU’s distinguished alumna to be recognized at the 2009 MEAC Basketball Tournament on March 12 during half-time of the 8 p.m. game.

Threet is a 1975 graduate of the University and the current National Captain of the Wildcat Boosters Association. She serves on the Fundraising Steering Committee for the Athletic Training Center; the President’s Athletic Task Force; and locally has served as Booster Captain for the Georgia and the Atlanta Alumni Chapters. She also serves as secretary of the Foundation for her Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority chapter, and is the webmaster for the chapter’s site. She is an instructional designer for Bank of America.
UPCOMING EVENT

FEBRUARY 6
10 am - 12 pm
Odessa Chambliss
Wellness Center
at Bethune-Cookman University
School of Nursing

Blood pressure screenings
Healthy heart information
Weight checks
Nutritional counseling
Giveaway drawings
and more!

Entire campus is encouraged to attend and wear RED all day!
Call 386.481.2465 for details.

Feb. 6 is NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY
show your support for women’s heart disease awareness

Wildcat Connections is produced twice a month by the Office of Institutional Advancement. You can send news items, comments, and suggestions to: connections@cookman.edu

You may also call 386.481.2990 or email Liz Poston postone@cookman.edu, Meredith Rodriguez rodriguezm@cookman.edu, and Devon Quash quasihd@cookman.edu, who all contributed to articles in the newsletter.