



*If You Can Dream It, You Can Achieve It at an HBCU!*

**Statement of Lezli Baskerville, Esquire  
President & CEO  
National Anti-Hazing and Anti-Violence Task Force Announcement  
January 17, 2012 2:00 P.M.  
National Press Club  
Washington, D.C.**

NAFEO, the national membership association of the nation's 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and 50 Predominantly Black Institutions, is delighted that the nation's faith leaders, civil rights/civil liberties and social justice leaders, black mayors and black newspaper publishers are joining us in a New Coalition of Conscience to eradicate the scourge and barbarism of hazing, the bane of violence and the tyranny of intolerance from campus life. It is fitting that the uncivilized killing of a drum major in this era has led to the establishment of a New Coalition of Conscience as we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a drum major for justice, whose life was also extinguished in a ruthless killing. Dr. King called us to "a nonviolent affirmation of the sacredness of all human life." Before and since his appeal, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been leading the nation and the world in nonviolent affirmations of the sacredness of human life. Today is no different.

As we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this week, on the 83rd anniversary of the birth of this prophet of our time-- and every day throughout the year-- the trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities are producing sterling talent that is benefitting and will continue to benefit the Republic immeasurably. They are providing students with the intercultural, interpersonal, and political skills with which to compete and thrive in a diverse yet still Balkanized world. They are teaching students to think analytically and strategically; read critically, speak effectively and in many languages; write with precision and clarity; exhibit competency in academic disciplines; demonstrate dignity, peace and love in comportment, and assume leadership roles in society. Every day on the campuses of the nation's 105 HBCUs administrators, faculty, and staff are providing young men and women with "thrival skills" and compass, and modeling the legacy of Dr. King.

HBCUs remain at the creative forefront of American education, offering the tools and skills necessary to prepare students to promote peace at home and abroad; secure our communities and our homeland; meet pressing global and community health care needs; and fight injustice with the power of ideas, and by closing the achievement gap and opening doors of opportunity to those who are ill-served by many of the systems in our communities and the nation. They are continuing to do more for students with fewer resources than any other higher education institutions. Most HBCUs are the economic engines in their communities.

HBCUs are preparing our students for the growth and high needs disciplines of today and tomorrow—graduating 50% of African Americans in the teaching professions; in excess of 33% of African Americans with undergraduate degrees in the sciences, technology, engineering, and

mathematics; 40% of those who pursue advanced degrees in STEM and 60% of African Americans in health professions. They are also instilling in our students faith, hope, love, and purpose; the value of family, community and of all life. HBCUs are imbuing our students with a sense of global connectivity and interdependence—of Oneness. They are modeling approaches to achieving a peaceful coexistence, ecumenism, tolerance and understanding. They are doing this with loving hearts and souls.

Despite the best efforts of those in the HBCU and PBI communities, between 1854 and now, we have lost 9 students to hazing, initiation or pledge-related accidents<sup>1</sup>—students who were beacons of light in this dark world. HBCU students who were tomorrow’s scientists, mathematicians, foreign language interpreters, engineers, economists, and teachers committed to teaching the children of today and tomorrow how to live and love; students committed to finding ways to feed the hungry, cure disease, house the homeless and otherwise make the world a better place.

The senseless, ruthless death of one of our students—my Sons and Daughters all--is one death too many. And my soul cries out for Mr. and Mrs. Champion and the extended Champion family. My heart bleeds for the entire FAMU Family at the loss of Drum Major Champion. I thank the Champions for finding it within their spirits to use the horrific and unconscionable death of their son to join and elevate in urgency the need to end hazing and violence on campuses across America: historically black campuses, historically white campuses, 2- year, and 4-year, public, private, undergraduate, graduate or professional campuses: all campuses across America. NAFEO, the black college community and I look forward to working with the Champions and the Anti-Hazing and Anti-Violence Coalition toward this shared goal.

Dr. George Cooper, President of South Carolina State University; President of the Council of 1890 Universities, Chair of the NAFEO Presidents’ Council on Anti-Hazing and Anti-Violence, and Co-Chair of the National Anti-Hazing/Anti-Violence Taskforce, previously outlined the specific actions in which NAFEO will engage the black college community and other college campuses across the nation—our PET Project (Peace, Ecumenism, and Tolerance). I stand ready to answer questions about the project at the appropriate time.

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<sup>1</sup> These data are from Hank Nuwer’s *Chronology of Deaths Among U.S. College Students* (as a result of hazing, initiation, and pledging-related accidents without criminal charges and/or admissions of hazing by a group or individuals). The total number of hazing-related student deaths reported from 1838 to the present is 153.



### **HBCU and PBI PET Project 2012-2016**

The Black College Community will engage in PET Project 2012-2016 (Peace, Ecumenism, Tolerance) designed to promote not merely the absence of hazing and other violent acts, but also to stimulate souls generated by Agape love, caring, peace, and ecumenism. We will work indefatigably in a multifaceted program (PET Project) to instill in our students and others in our campus community, our “Oneness;” the understanding that we are all interconnected and interdependent and that our destinies are intertwined. No form of violence, sadism, brutality, carnage or intolerance will be endured on an HBCU or PBI campus.

Under the Leadership of Dr. George Cooper, President of South Carolina State University; President of the Council of 1890 Universities, Chair of the NAFEO Presidents’ Council on Anti-Hazing and Anti-Violence, and Co-Chair of the National Anti-Hazing/Anti-Violence Taskforce, NAFEO members will determine the specific projects in which the HBCU/PBI Community will engage toward the above ends. Resource availability will ultimately determine the order and number of activities in which the black colleges and universities engage as a collective. Task Force Members will recommend to the NAFEO membership some or all of the below projects as component parts of **PET Project 2012- 2016** (in no particular order):

- Curriculum Development for Teaching **Peace, Ecumenism, Tolerance** (PET) as a seminar and integrating these principles across the curriculum)
- Training and Certification of Campus Administrators, Faculty and Staff in Best Practices in Preventing/Responding to Hazing, Violence, Intolerance and Promoting Tolerance, Civility and Ecumenism
- Dedicate the 2012 HBCU and PBI **“Writers of Passage”** student national essay contest to the theme of ways of ending campus hazing and violence, and promoting and sustaining peace, civility, tolerance, inclusion and ecumenism
- Secure funding then administer a national campus competition to identify innovative approaches to ending campus hazing and violence
- As part of the NAFEO Student Advocacy Training Institute at the National Dialogue on Blacks in Higher Education in Washington, D.C., March 25-28, 2012, train students in best practices in non-violent social change, advocacy and violence abatement and prevention; certify students who complete the training as PET Trainers; identify and secure grant funding to provide a stipend to the students to serve as campus trainers and leads on their campuses in anti-hazing and anti-violence
- Integrate partners and activities of the National Anti-Hazing/Anti-Violence Task Force into NAFEO’s 38<sup>th</sup> National Dialogue on Blacks in Higher Education in Washington, D.C., March 25-28, 2012, which has as its theme, **“HBCUs and PBIs, Tooting Our Horn a Little Louder!”**

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