

Black enrollment down at University of Georgia

ATHENS, Ga. (AP) — Despite efforts to attract more black students to the University of Georgia, black enrollment dropped this fall for the second consecutive year.

The University System of Georgia said 1,871 black students enrolled at the university this fall — 6.2 percent of the total enrollment of 30,009. That's down from 1,906 black students, or 6.4 percent, in fall 1997 and 2,003, or 6.8 percent, in fall 1996.

"Six percent, given the state's population, is a very disappointing figure," University System Chancellor Stephen Portch said.

Only two of the state's four-year public colleges and one two-year college have a smaller percentage of black students than the University of Georgia — North Georgia College & State University at 2.2 percent, Dalton State College at 2.4 percent and

Gainesville College at 2.9 percent.

Among the state's four major research universities, the University of Georgia ranks last in the percentage of black enrollment. Georgia State University has 25 percent, Georgia Tech 8.9 percent and the Medical College of Georgia 7.1 percent.

Statewide, 21.7 percent of students at Georgia's 34 public two-year and four-year colleges are black. But the statewide total, 43,426 students, also is down from last year, when there were 44,936 black students, or 21.9 percent.

Portch said he does not think the decrease at the University of Georgia is significant.

The big challenge, he said, is to get more blacks to participate in higher education. He said the most telling statistic he has seen recently is that only 18 percent of white college-

bound seniors and 11 percent of black college-bound seniors took a calculus course in high school.

"Long-term, the single most important thing we can do is help all Georgia students get strongly prepared for college admission," Portch said.

Portch also said rising admissions standards and the "uncertain legal environment" surrounding affirmative action programs may have contributed to the decrease in black students at the University of Georgia.

Since the first HOPE scholarships were awarded in 1993, applications to the university have increased and so have the average SAT scores of new students, making it tougher for students to get into the state's largest university.

And race has been given less weight in the admissions process since 1995, when the university reworked its admissions formula because of court rulings in other states.

University spokesman Tom Jackson said the school has made extraordinary

efforts to attract black students over the years — visiting high schools, sending direct mail and hosting minority recognition days — with relatively little success.

One factor could be the school's former reputation as a hostile place for blacks, which began 40 years ago when the university's first black students were greeted by riots, said Vanessa Smith, director of the university's Office of Minority Affairs.

She also attributed the decline in black enrollment to stiff competition from other

schools in Georgia, including some of the country's best historically black colleges.

"I think the HOPE scholarship probably provided them with a lot of choices," Smith said.

Portch said while he would like to increase black enrollment in public colleges, the goal is to get more black students into higher education — no matter where.

"If all we do is just move the deck chairs around, we haven't achieved anything for the state or the population," he said.

Driving

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drivers nor police officers, and its findings cannot be used in any legal or administrative discrimination case.

But the preliminary study group has proposed several ideas worth considering.

They include developing, with the community input, standards for police behavior regarding traffic stops, and requiring greater use of in-police car video cameras to monitor and influence police behavior.

Obviously, the federal study has a long way to go before its conclusion. But the urgency of resolving this issue must not be underestimated. Respect for the law — and for justice — is a two-way street.

Leone

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And although government forces enjoy wide popularity, they have on occasion have indiscriminately bombarded civilians in retaliatory raids against the rebels.

Partly as a result of the war, Sierra Leoneans are forced to cope with a shattered health care system and a burgeoning AIDS epidemic. Life expectancy is just 34 years and the average yearly wage only \$171.

The country's economy, formerly dependent on diamond and bauxite mining, has been nearly destroyed.

Yet even though Freetown, once a charming city of Victorian cottages and shops, is now a decaying hulk of bullet-scarred British architecture, messages of hope meet with roars of approval. "Feel the joy! Increase your business! Increase your wages! Bring safety and protection to your family! Live and continue living!" Rev. Freddy Abu Sidique shouts to enthusiastic parishioners during a Sunday sermon at the Flaming Bible Church.

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