

Slur

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Meyer."

Lonnie Wright, Associate Vice President of the CCSN Hospitality Institute and one of only two African-Americans at the associate vice president level in the CCSN system, was, unlike Howard, not surprised at the person.

"Mike Meyer tried to demote me," Wright said last week. "But I fought it," he continued, "and Ron Remington saw the value of keeping me."

"Mike Meyer did resign. I think he did the right thing," said Howard, adding, "Yes, I did encourage resignation."

Remington has indicated that the school has "zero tolerance" for discrimination. Others rate the tolerance level considerably higher.

"From the top person in the state system all the way down to the institutional level, racism exists," said Howard. Referring, in general, to administrators of Nevada's post-secondary schools, she said, "They've been talking the talk, but haven't been walking the walk, even my fellow board members. We need to implement a zero tolerance policy systemwide."

Said Wright, who is also Vice President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Tri-State Conference and, as such, the highest-ranking NAACP official in Nevada: "I think not only Mike Meyer, but the system needs a wake-up call. There are instructors and professors that need a wake-up call. This transcends the college. This is a problem throughout the institutions of higher learning in the state of Nevada."

Meyer had been a Boys and Girls Club director for decades, and, until this fiasco, had been an integral part of the college's fundraising efforts. Given his prominence in the CCSN hierarchy, his behavior was reckless. Howard, who became a board member in January, agrees, and is troubled by the message it sends.

"I expressed the same concerns with the president. It has a chilling effect," she said, explaining that just last month she spoke at a meeting of the Board of Regents in Reno "about the language that's being used in offices, in classrooms, by professors."

Said Remington, "We do not want the perception that the college is anything but welcoming to everyone. I think we have a wonderful opportunity for a new beginning. People want to put these kinds of incidents behind us, and move forward."

Howard also raised discrimination issues at a meeting held to discuss the system's master plan. "Most of the board members were there. I pointed out that diversity issues are not being adequately addressed in the master plan," she said, noting that the use of language, as typified by the Meyer incident, is an example of the inadequacies.

But the head of the Urban Chamber of Commerce warns that in cases like Meyer's, black people should not overreact, but should, instead, recognize that they may be part of the problem.

Said Executive Director E. Louis Overstreet: "It's patently unfair to destroy a person's entire career as a result of an isolated case of using an inappropriate phrase."

"Sometimes we contribute to the problem by our own casual use of the word in public forums," he said. "White people can, understandably, become comfortable using it as a result of hearing us use it in such a casual fashion. I think it's a problem that black leaders have not addressed our own casual use of that word."

Nevertheless, one such leader, Wendell Williams, is dismayed by Meyer's remark and has indicated he and wife are contemplating whether to sue the college. He says this uninhibited use of a racial slur by a vice president suggests that minority students at CCSN exist in a dismal race relations environment.

Williams, noting that the college has ongoing problems attracting minorities, revealed another irony. "I was asked by two regents to help develop outreach to minority students," he said.



WENDELL WILLIAMS

Sharpton: Florida remains hostile to Blacks

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The Rev. Al Sharpton last week criticized the government and police in South Florida, saying he sees a pattern of racial bias causing blacks to be treated as second-class citizens.

"Everyone is not welcome, everyone is not treated the same and South Beach is looking like the Deep South," Sharpton said.

Sharpton spoke before a hearing of a State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The panel held the informal hearing to listen to residents' complaints about discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of police.

Sharpton told the committee that his group, The National Action Network, would pressure South Florida government and law enforcement officials to fix what he called a pattern of "continued profiling, abuse and police misconduct."

"We intend to make this a national cry ... we intend to

see something rectified here," Sharpton told the panel. About 150 people attended. Dr. Bobby D. Doctor, regional director for the commission, said the panel has received several complaints alleging police abuse, discrimination in Ft. Lauderdale government offices and concerns over the impact of a federal housing program.

"It is very, very clear that there are a number of problems in the South Florida area," Doctor said.

Some of those waiting to speak before the panel at the hearing occasionally chanted a refrain often heard during the presidential election recount last year: "No Justice, No Peace."

Sharpton and others have alleged that black voters were disenfranchised by institutional racism.

"Florida in many ways has represented nationally some of the worst forms of abuse of civil rights in recent memory," Sharpton said. "The commission needs to know that there's a national concern."

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