

Gainous terminated as president of Florida A&M

By Crystal Y. Lewis
Special to Sentinel-Voice
TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (NNPA) - In a passionate and historic meeting, a Florida A&M University president has been publicly removed from office.

Trustees voted 9-4 recently to terminate President Fred Gainous, stipulating that only a unanimous vote after his evaluation could keep him in his office past Jan. 1.

Gainous spoke briefly to reporters after the meeting. "I think the administration ought to have an environment in which it can work," he said.

"I will trust that as FAMU moves forward in the future

that will exist."

And although Gainous said he was not surprised that the trustees voted to fire him, he said at no point did he consider resigning.

Gainous said he had not yet decided if he would stay until January.

Gov. Jeb Bush in a statement said, "The Florida A&M University (FAMU) Board of Trustees is fully responsible for the selection and evaluation of its leadership.

"It is my sincere hope that the interests of FAMU's students remain the school's number one priority. FAMU has a rich heritage of excellence, and as the university move's forward, it is impor-



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tant to continue that proud tradition and serve its students well."

After several passionate speeches for and against Gainous, including one by National Alumni Association President Alvin Bryant calling for Gainous' removal and

were Trustees Randy Hanna, Barney Bishop, Regina Benjamin and Leerie Jenkins. Trustee Al Cardenas called in during a break after the vote to say that he had tried unsuccessfully to get into the meeting via phone and wanted the record to reflect his affirmative vote.

Trustee Virgil Miller, also student body president, amended the motion by adding the stipulation that although Gainous' contract would end Jan. 1, a unanimous vote of the trustees at their December meeting could re-

scind it. This time period, he said, would allow for a transition in this time of chaos."

He also asked for the current evaluation process to take place.

Larry Robinson, provost and vice president for academic affairs, said he hoped the university could move past the decision.

"What I'm concerned about is us moving past where we are now. I am concerned and hopeful that we can quickly move past this."

Crystal Y. Lewis writes for the Capital Outlook.

Debates

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bate.

Since presidential debates began in 1956, there have been only two Black journalists to moderate: Carol Simpson of ABC (1992) and Bernard Shaw of CNN (1988). This year's presidential moderators are Jim Lehrer, anchor of "The NewsHour" on PBS; Charles Gibson, co-anchor of "Good Morning America" on ABC and Bob Schieffer, moderator of CBS' "Face the Nation."

"They could have afforded an opportunity by moving away from a single moderator format," Morial says. In his letter, Morial stated that numerous Black journalists are well qualified to moderate high-profile debates.

"What do the three chosen moderators have that Lester Holt, NBC; Juan Williams, NPR; Tavis Smiley, PBS and NPR; Joe Johns, CNN; Suzanne Malveaux, CNN; George Curry, NNPA and hundreds of other journalists of color do not?" Morial wrote. "Both Republican and Democratic presidential administrations over the past decade have strived to appoint cabinets that represent all of America."

There should also be diversity among journalists moderating the presidential debates, Morial stated.

Numerous organizations are backing Morial's call for an urban and civil rights issues debate, including the National League of Cities.

"Obviously we think it's very important that the candidates address an urban agenda," says League spokeswoman Sherry Appel. "There are [millions] of people that live in cities and towns in the United States and there are

real issues there."

Appel cited crime and economic development in blighted urban areas as among the leading issues that the presidential candidates should be pressed to address.

According to the contract between the presidential candidates and the Debate Commission, Kerry and Bush are not allowed to press for separate debates.

"The parties agree that they will not (1) issue any challenges for additions debates, (2) appear at any other debate or adversarial forum with any other presidential or vice presidential candidate or (3) accept any television or radio air time offers that involve a debate format or otherwise involve the simultaneous appearance of more than one candidate," the contract states.

Morial says the candidates wield too much power over the current debate format.

"The idea that they don't allow follow-up questions, the idea that the town hall format requires people to give questions in advance sanitizes the debate," Morial wrote to the commission. "It gives the debate more of a Hollywood scripted demeanor as opposed to a real discussion about the issues. And it raises tremendous questions."

Neither of the Commission's co-chairmen, Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. of Nevada, or Paul G. Kirk Jr. of Massachusetts, returned repeated phone calls. Fahrenkopf is a former Republican National Committee chairman (1983-1989). Kirk is a former Democratic National Committee chairman (1985-1989).

In an Aug. 26 letter to Morial, the commission's executive director, Janet

Brown, defended the current arrangement.

"The CPD shares your belief that the concerns and views of all Americans be represented in the debates, and that the candidates address issues such as those you listed: jobs, education, health care, the criminal justice system, and others," she wrote. "We have structured this year's debates to meet those objectives."

Washington, D.C. powerbroker Vernon Jordan, who negotiated the contract for the Kerry campaign, also promised that Black issues would be raised during the debates. "I am confident that Sen. Kerry, our nominee, will satisfy the needs and aspirations and the pain of Black people," Jordan said in an NNPA interview in June.

Morial says because the finished product is not enough, he will keep the pressure on the Debate Commission by asking more organizations to write for an additional debate, or to change the rules of those coming up and to push for more racial inclusion in the questioning.

"When they had the Foreman and Ali fight, they didn't sit down and decide the size of the ring. And Ali couldn't say, 'Don't hit me in my face,'" Morial says. "And Foreman couldn't say, 'I don't want to go past three rounds because I might get tired.'"

Morial concludes in his letter: "It is indeed unfortunate that the Presidential Commission on debates cannot see the value in having an inclusive multi-faced discussion representative of the multi-ethnic and multi-racial society for which these two candidates seek to lead for the next four years."

another by Bishop A.J. Richardson, Trustee Challis Lowe brought forth a motion to terminate.

Voting against the motion

Detroit schools get fitness grant

DETROIT (AP) - The city's public school district will use a grant funded through the No Child Left Behind Act to help students become healthier and fight obesity.

Detroit Public Schools have been awarded an \$818,803 three-year grant to initiate, expand or improve physical education programs, for students in grades K-12, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced Friday.

The Carol M. White Physical Education Program, part of the No Child Left Behind Act, will award a total of 237 new grants worth nearly \$69 million across the country this year, the Detroit Free Press reported in a Monday story.

Ken Coleman, a spokesman for the Detroit Public Schools, said Sunday he did not

yet know exactly how the district plans to spend the grant money, or what specific guidelines the district must follow in using the funds.

This year, Detroit was named the nation's fattest city by Men's Fitness magazine, but its public school system also received a B-minus for the nutritional value of its lunches, according to a Washington-based group called the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

The physicians group, known for its stance against eating meat, dairy and animal products, ranked Detroit third on a list of 11 large school districts nationally that get subsidized food through the National School Lunch Program.



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