



Philip Ghansah

Multimedia Strategies

Feature Story

University of West Alabama

The smile grew wider, and the laughter became more frequent as Alana Adebayo recalled her four-year experience at Spelman college. She claims to remember enjoying walking the brick-paved paths of her campus during the warm Atlanta summer months. She reminisced about the fun times she had with friends on her campus, especially Sandra, who she claimed always wore a bright yellow shirt, she said “it reminded me of her personality, which was always bright and welcoming,” said Adebayo.

The campus as she remembers was full of life and vibrancy, she remembers the scent of freshly-cut grass and the prominent colors of yellow and green flowers around campus, but that was then. Now she would be left with news that would change her life at Spelman college forever, “she must leave Spelman college in 48 hours”, according to notice she claimed a Spelman official served her. Having no place to go immediately, she would be forced to relocate to friend’s place, where she claimed she slept on the floor due to limited space.

What happened to Adebayo though it seems uneasy and troubling, it is very common for universities alike around the nation to oust students that cannot pay for college. According to the chronicle of higher education, in 2014, Kentucky State University reinstated 70 percent of the students that were kicked out back to full-time status after the student’s failure to pay their tuition.

In the interview, Adebayo explains that she set up her class schedules and internships for graduation when in February, she along with 80 other students were told to leave Spelman college due to long-standing remaining balances on their accounts.” My student card was deactivated, and I remember being sad and hurt, I had everything ready for after graduation and

everything changed so fast. I had dreamed of graduating and giving my family all the things they ever wanted”, said Adebayo. A Spelman college admissions representative was called to confirm or deny the claim, but they offered no comment due to privacy standards by the college.

Hoping that she could get the university to provide leniency and re-enroll her back to full-time status as Kentucky State University did with their students in the same situation, Adebayo would continue to attend classes. When she was asked why she took such a risky move, she claimed “I am the second daughter of parents from Nigeria, I haven’t seen my mother since I was three. I believe my past experiences have made me a stronger person and that is why I dared to take such actions”.

Adebayo had always struggled to pay for tuition since she first attended the college, She claims making regular payments was hard. She works multiple hours a week, holds a few scholarships and enlists family members to help make up the difference, but it has not been enough to settle the rising costs of education at her college.

Adebayo knew since she was a little girl that she would need to go to college so that she could be the successful doctor she always wanted to be, so when she was accepted into Spelman college with a 3.8-grade point average, she claims no one could match her excitement.

Going to Spelman college meant a lot to Adebayo, this would give her the chance to follow in the footsteps of the notable people that went there, Alice Walker poet, author, and novelist and Keshia Knight Pulliam who is an entrepreneur and famous actor.

Adebayo is in a situation that is not complicated; she couldn’t afford higher education and the fact she couldn’t caused an internal conflict between her dream of having a college degree

and affordability of that goal. Her determination to get a degree in pre-medicine would put her against the stereotype.

“I have tried everything I can to make college affordable so that I could continue my education. I have tried asking family members for money, reaching out to past alumni to see if they would sponsor a part of education, I have taken out loans, and I have taken on a part-time job. With everything I have done, it isn’t enough to pay for my tuition” said Adebayo.

Ironically, according to the Spelman college history page, the university was founded on the lack of affordability. In 1879, New England missionaries and teacher Harriet Giles and Sophia Packard traveled to the south to observe the education of women in the south. Shocked that there were no stable educational institutions in the area the women gathered to find a way to build and foster one, the only thing they lacked was the monetary means to build one. They eventually rallied together to raise the \$100 needed to build the university known today as Spelman College.

“The issue of affordability is one that not only seems to effect Adebayo, but it seems to affect other students that attend HBCU’s due to budget cuts and lack of academic resources. If the university had more cash donations by alumni or if the government provided it with more in loans the university wouldn’t need to oust its students due to financial insufficiencies said, Adebayo.

According to inside high education, Elizabeth City State University, a historically black university located in Wilberforce Ohio has had problems with sustaining the annual budget necessary to keep the university open. Administration at Central state university has considered in the past year whether it would be viable if they closed the university indefinitely or continue to keep it running. The issue of poor funding to historically black universities has plagued 40 of the United States black four-year institutions. Also, according to inside high education article, it

exposes that government cuts to student financial aid, enrollment continues to decline, and leadership scandals have also lead to the demise of the HBCU institution as well. The problem of HBCU's have become more widespread as even private HBCU's that are entirely dependent upon tuition are also losing money.

Spelman is celebrating the history of the college with its 137th anniversary; the college is trying to increase monetary support to aid student tuition. According to the Spelman website, the Seth and Beth Klarman foundation of Boston gave the college a \$5 million gift; the gift will fund scholarships and aid programs for current and incoming Spelman students.

"I hope no more students have to go through what I did", said by Adebayo

References

Alana Adebayo

Contact: AAdebayou@spelman.edu

Unidentified Spelman admissions representative- quoted exactly within the paper. Was denied information based on the college's privacy standards

We met at the Cleveland public library rice branch meeting room

Minorities and poor college students are shouldering the most student debt

www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/19/minorities-and-poor-college-students-are-shouldering-the-most-student-debt/?utm_term=.091cd701164b

Fighting for Survival

[//www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/24/public-hbcus-facing-tests-many-fronts-fight-survival](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/24/public-hbcus-facing-tests-many-fronts-fight-survival)

<https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/kentucky-state-u-re-enrolls-most-of-students-kicked-out-over-tuition-owed/85767>

[https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-releases/2018/01/22/spelman-receives-\\$5-million-gift-funding-seth-and-beth-klarman-scholarship](https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-releases/2018/01/22/spelman-receives-$5-million-gift-funding-seth-and-beth-klarman-scholarship)

<https://www.spelman.edu/alumnae/founders-day>