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## TWEETS

# Students participate in protest on first day of semester

🕒 January 26, 2018 👤 Gatepost News Staff 📁 News, slider 💬 0



(Students marched throughout campus on Jan. 16 in response to the six hate crimes that occurred last semester. Photo by Allie Gath.)



**By Cesareo Contreras**

Editor-in-Chief

**By Nadira Wicaksana**

Asst. News Editor

On Jan. 16, approximately 100 members of the FSU community participated in a student-led march and rally in response to the six hate crimes targeting students of color last semester.

Students, administrators and faculty gathered at the main steps of Dwight Hall around 12 p.m. before marching throughout campus.

Junior lyla Driggs, the main speaker at the rally, addressed the growing crowd, stressing she wanted a nonviolent protest and calling for them to join in “peaceful action as we begin to march.”

Driggs, who was also the lead organizer of the October protest, said the FSU community has not been given “any answers” that would lead to the arrest of the perpetrator(s) of the hate crimes.

“So, we’re here to continue the fight that we left off back on Oct. 31 and tell the school that we’re fighting for equality here on this campus,” she said.

Last week’s protest took place on the first day of the spring semester and was a day after the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday.

“Dr. King once said, ‘I’m not interested in power for power’s sake, but I’m interested in power that is moral. That is right. That is good,’” said Driggs, using her megaphone during the rally shortly following the march. “Let us use this power that we came with today to take an even bigger stand as students at Framingham State, and citizens of the world, to denounce hatred and put an end to racism and the racial hate crimes on this campus.”

Tweets by @TheGatepos



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EDIT:

The Gatepost would like to extend their congratulations to the class of 2020. Especially to our senior members:

- Mackenzie Berube
- Thomas Maye
- Evan Lee
- Sara Senesac
- Liam Gambon
- Lauren Paolini
- Lizzy Stocks
- Abigail Saggio

Thank you all for the late Thursday nights!

May 25, 2020



**The Gatepost**  
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Thank you all for the late Thursday nights and incredible articles!

May 24, 2020

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**Evan Lee**  
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Driggs was accompanied by Monica Cannon, a representative from Violence in Boston, a non-profit organization that aims to improve the quality of life “for individuals from disenfranchised communities by reducing the prevalence of violence and the impact of associated trauma,” according to its Facebook page.

Cannon echoed Driggs’ sentiment and before marching, led the crowd in a chant, saying, “What do we want? Freedom! When do we want it? Now! If we don’t get it, shut it down!”

Members of the crowd added their own chants as they made their way from Dwight Hall to the Whittemore Library.

Protesters could be heard shouting phrases such as, “Black Lives Matter,” “Whose school? Our school,” “Show me what democracy looks like – this is what democracy looks like” and “White silence is violence.”

As they marched, many students held up signs. One sign read, “We are stronger than your hate.” Another read, “We have a dream to NOT go to a racist school.”

From there, protesters marched throughout campus, stopping outside the residence halls where each of the hate crimes occurred and repeating their chants.

Driggs ended the march on the North Hall patio, where she proceeded to outline the demands she developed along with members from Black Student Union, Brother to Brother, Latinos Unidos N’ Acción and other individuals.

She said the University has “stopped the ongoing conversations about the reoccurring racial incidents and forced us to heal while wounds still remain open.”

In the wake of the crimes, Driggs called for the administrators to hire and promote more people of color University-wide – specifically in the counseling center and the science department. She also insisted they install cameras “in every residence hall, hallway and stairwell on campus” and establish an African-American Studies major and minor.

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Additionally, Driggs called for the creation of a diversity scholarship for low-income minority students who live in urban communities.

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Driggs ended the rally by instructing everyone to turn to their neighbor, “like going to church,” and telling them, “Neighbor, I love you, and I promise to make tomorrow better than today.”

BSU President Destinee Morris said she hopes the University “acknowledges the demands and puts them into full effect.

“The demands created should be able to happen. They are logical and they were designed to better the community and not just specific individuals,” Morris said in an email.

In an interview with The Gatepost the following day, President F. Javier Cevallos said he applauds “the students who took part in yesterday’s march and stand with them in rejecting racism. It was very symbolic and appropriate to have the march take place the day after MLK day and I thought they lived up to Dr. King’s ideals when it comes to holding a peaceful and powerful protest.”

Cevallos, who was at a meeting in the State House in Boston at the time of the protest, said he thought the students’ demands were “thoughtful” and were “a reasonable set of goals.

“Some are initiatives we are already working on,” he said.

Cevallos said the University has already begun to install more cameras in and around residence halls and that a number of scholarships for low-income minorities already exist.

Commenting on the hiring of more diverse faculty, Cevallos said about 19.8 percent of the University’s full-time faculty are people of color, up from 10 percent in 2012.

“So there has been progress, but we want to make sure we continue diversifying our faculty,” he said. “I’m proud to say that 60 percent of our current executive staff, which consists of myself and the University’s vice presidents, is made up of people of color.”

Cevallos said he will look into hiring and promoting more people

of color in the counseling center and within specific departments. He also will be meeting with Academic Affairs to discuss if the University could create an African-American Studies minor and major.

"I want the students to be a central voice in our efforts as we move forward as a community. I am committed to working with students to strengthen our community and root out the racism that has occurred," he said.

Administrators in attendance included Millie González, interim chief officer of diversity, inclusion and community engagement, as well as Lorretta Holloway, vice president for enrollment and student development.

González said she supported the students' right to protest and called the march "wonderful," but didn't "understand the piece about the University silencing them."

She added, "If anything, it's the opposite. They're celebrating their voice, supporting their voice." González added she would like to reach out to Driggs about the comment.

Holloway said the rally was a true representation of the University, rather than the hate crimes.

"You have people out in this cold weather to be supportive of the students – on the first day of classes, too," Holloway said.

She added, "I hope that people see that all of the ugliness is not Framingham State."

Senior Iracely Sanchez said it was important to join the protest because "we ended [the semester] with a racist incident. Even though FSU has become more diverse in the last 10 years ... we have to keep going."

Senior Jackson Stevens said Driggs organized the rally effectively. Stevens, however, was disappointed there weren't more new faces.

"The same people come every time," he added. Cevallos "never

comes to these.”

He’s also concerned the demands won’t be met.

“I’m hesitant because we’ve been asking for a lot of these for the past four years I’ve been a student, so we’re just going to go ahead and see,” Stevens said.

Sophomore Ayanna Ferguson said she participated in the Jan.16 rally because she “wants things to get better. ... Today was a success in my book considering how many people came and how much got done.”

She added, “I want people to come together and love each other.”

*[Kayllan Olicio contributed to this article.]*



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