

http://www.heraldsun.com/news/duke-protesters-threatened-with-arrest/article_fce805dc-f9f7-11e5-aff3-db9e4ef38cf4.html

EDITOR'S PICK

FEATURED

Duke protesters threatened with arrest

Katie Jansen Updated 3 min ago



The Herald-Sun | Whitney Keller

The Herald-Sun | Whitney Keller The nine Duke students that have been occupying the Allen Building since Friday afternoon joined a crowd of supporters on Sunday, April 3, 2016 in front of the Allen Building at Duke University.

DURHAM -- Duke students took to the lawn Sunday morning with blankets, homework and even tents, camping out not for tickets to the Duke-UNC game, but in solidarity with nine students who launched a sit-in Friday afternoon in the university's administrative offices building.

The students occupied the Allen Building in protest of the university's handling of racial incidents – specifically, a lawsuit that alleges Duke Executive Vice President Tallman Trask hit a black female parking attendant with his car in 2014 and drove away after using racial slurs.

Duke Students and Workers in Solidarity leaders said they'd been organizing the sit-in since the university newspaper, The Chronicle, wrote an expose on the lawsuit and on other allegedly discriminatory problems within Duke's parking and transportation services department.

House For Rent

first-access-rent-to-own.com

No Credit Check. No App Fee New Homes
For Rent Under \$700



Smoky Mtn Cabin Vacation



Work at Home - No Fee



2.5% Fixed Mortgage Rate



"The sit-in is in response from systematic attempts of the university to cover up instances of abuse," said Anastasia Karklina, a Duke alumna and current doctoral student who helped to organize the protest.

Protesters released a list of seven demands, including the firing of Trask, Vice President of Administration Kyle Cavanaugh and Parking and Transportation Services Director Carl DePinto.

STUDENTS ASSEMBLE

Amid rumors that university administrators would force the nine occupiers to leave the building sometime Sunday, supporters began arriving around 10 a.m., making signs and chanting.

Protesters also demanded full amnesty for the occupiers as word circulated that the students inside could face arrest or disciplinary action from Duke.

"We believe it is shameful that the administration would suppress student dissent and the right to protest," Karklina said.

Danica Liu, who graduated from Duke in December, said she was there to be a witness and to hold police accountable for their actions.

"I think (the university administration) is trying not to make a big deal of it, so the best thing for us to do is to make a big deal of it," she said.

No one was allowed to exit or enter the Allen Building Sunday, with security personnel stationed at every entrance. Occasionally, occupiers emerged to share news from the balcony, but they otherwise communicated with those below through text messages, phone calls and Tweets.

Updates flowed quickly at first. By 11:35 a.m., Duke President Richard Brodhead and Dean of Students Sue Wasiolek had arrived to meet with the students inside, spurring a chant from supporters outside.

Shortly after noon, the protesters marched to the back of the building as Brodhead left, surrounding his vehicle and yelling, "Shame on you."

At 1:30 p.m., Mike Schoenfeld, vice president for public affairs, briefed members of the media on the situation as protesters disrupted the press conference with chants.

Schoenfeld said that administrators would continue to converse with students in hopes of reaching a "peaceful and mutually satisfying resolution."

He would not comment on the lawsuit against Trask or when students would be removed from the Allen Building, saying only that students would be notified at an undetermined time that "their permission to be in the building has been revoked."

But the occupiers said they were not willing to negotiate until amnesty was promised, adding that each protester had something at stake. A senior in the group said she was worried about her degree being delayed as a behavioral review was conducted, and an international student said a citation could affect his chances to apply for an internship and an extension of his stay in the U.S.

COMMUNITY JOINS EFFORT

Not only students were involved in the protest. Organizers urged the students assembled to call on faculty for support.

One such faculty member was Wahneema Lubiano, who has taught at Duke for 20 years, currently in the department of African and African-American studies.

Lubiano said she had students who helped organize the protest and who engaged in the actual sit-in, adding that she's spoken via phone to occupiers over the weekend.

Lubiano said she and other faculty members were spreading the word and trying to help the students.

"The students themselves are leading the way to get the university to live up to its ideas of the Duke University community," she said.

Jennifer Bowles, another faculty member, said she brought out the first tent to give students a place to sleep if they had to spend the night to support the occupiers.

"This is a chance to really support a movement that's brewing to make things more fair here," she said.

The students' plight also drew city officials to Duke's campus Sunday morning. City Councilwoman Jillian Johnson and Durham Public Schools Board of Education member Sendolo Diaminah spoke to the students to express their support.

'HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION'

Durham resident Chela Cowan said she was sitting on the lawn to show her gratitude for the students who were taking a stand. She said she has experienced firsthand the alleged problems within Duke's parking and transportation services department.

Her mom worked for the department for about 17 years before she was laid off after being told her position as a human resources manager was no longer needed.

Cowan said her mom loved her job but found it difficult to deal with her superiors, who would often say degrading things in regard to race.

"I used to see her come home so defeated and depressed," Cowan said.



She said she feels her mother's layoff was "clearly retaliation" because it came shortly after her mother supported fellow former employee Renee Adkins by testifying in her arbitration case.

Adkins, a former special events manager who worked with the department nearly 18 years, said via phone that the department has a "long history of discrimination and harassment."

She said she feels her termination last year was a result of her complaints about injustices. She said her workers faced discrimination not only from higher ups, but also from people who they dealt with on a daily basis.

One of her workers was spit on by a former Duke law student, she said.

"They didn't like the fact I spoke up for my people," she said.

Adkins said she tried to file complaints in Duke's internal systems, including the Office for Institutional Equity, which she called "a joke."

"It felt like a mafia family," she said, referring to Duke's administration. "They're all protecting one another."

THE PROTEST WEARS ON

As the hours passed, the protest turned into more waiting than news.

Sydney Roberts, one of the students inside, said via a 5:35 p.m. phone call that the students met with Provost Sally Kornbluth during the afternoon, a meeting that she called “productive.”

But the students still didn’t have any updates on when they would be forced to leave and were “waiting on the administration’s next move,” Roberts said. She expressed hope that amnesty was still on the table but said forcible removal was also still a possible outcome.

By 5:45 p.m., three tents had been erected on the lawn outside Allen Building, and a Duke official was speaking to the owners of the tents. The official said he was “sharing university policy,” but said he had no additional comment.

Rumors flew that another meeting with administrators had been scheduled for 7 p.m. Then another announcement came that the meeting had been postponed until 8 p.m.

That meeting was supposed to include the occupiers, faculty members, Provost Kornbluth, Dean Wasiolek and Vice President for Student Affairs Larry Moneta.

No other information was available by press time. Several tents remained, and many protesters said they were prepared to stay throughout the night.



[Jobs Hiring \(Apply Now\)](#)

[costco.findtherightjob.com](#)

Find Job Openings In Your Area. Apply For a Position Today!

[Interior Design Degree](#) ▼

[Start Download Now](#) ▼

[Find Trucking Jobs](#) ▼

Contact Katie Jansen: kjansen@heraldsun.com, 919-419-6675. She blogs about Orange County at Orange Pulp: <http://bit.ly/OrangePulp>

Katie Jansen

Katie Jansen covers Orange County for The Herald-Sun. She graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2014, where she studied journalism, English and creative writing.