

Features

OPINION: DRESS CODE HIGHLIGHTS DOUBLE STANDARD ON HISTORICALLY BLACK CAMPUS



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Policy on personal expression is never taken lightly, especially when it is accompanied with layers of misogyny and racism.

Following the release of Xavier's 2023-2024 code of conduct students were left in disbelief of the newly added dress code policy which includes standards of

on campus. Modesty does not stop fashion, anyone who is stylish knows that they do not have to be revealing to look good, and most students prefer a modest comfy look over anything indecent anyways. The real problem is that our historically Black university is reinforcing the same rules and policies that many of us came here to get away from.

HBCUs are supposed to be the place where Black students can come and express themselves freely. We all come from a society where microaggressions and second-class citizenship is the norm. We chose to attend an HBCU to get away from these issues. Since middle school, I have been attending schools with dress codes that feel

were enforcing the dress code. Young Black girls are often more developed than white students from a young age, so what started as a 'policy on apparel' ended up as an example of the adultification of young Black girls; and you can clearly see this in Xavier's current dress code.

As mentioned by many of the people I talked to concerning the dress code, white female students at PWI campuses are allowed to wear whatever they want. If you go to a PWI you will see countless girls in oversized shirts, shorts that are not visible in said shirts and crocs. While this outfit is seen as basic to them, if worn on a Black girl it would be instantly oversexualized and deemed inappropriate.

constructive, but more chaos. As a woman with natural hair, like most women on campus, I know how hard it is to constantly maintain our hair while being full time students. I have missed classes trying to do my hair before, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. Hats and scarves are ways for us to still be productive without having to be embarrassed by how our hair looks that day.

Xavier is reinforcing the double standard in society that as Black people must constantly be on our Ps and Qs just to be worthy of respect. We came to this institution to be free in our expression of blackness. Every time we step off campus, we are reminded that this society was not made for us, but to limit us. Imagine

how we feel as students who pay to go to a primarily Black institution when we face the same issue on our own campus.

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appropriate dress for various locations and events on campus, and rules banning the wear of baseball caps, du-rags, and headscarves. After talking to my peers, most had the same opinion: we deserve to be comfortable, we pay to go here, and students at our PWI counterparts are able to wear whatever they want.

In my opinion, it goes much deeper than simply limiting the way we can dress

specifically geared towards the Black population. While these policies never mentioned race specifically, the bans on du-rags and scarves make it obvious who they are talking to.

The part that always bothered me most was the rules on the length of bottoms and the ban on tank tops. Not because I wanted to wear short shorts, but because my Black peers were more often targeted by teachers who

The part of the policy that bans headgear of any kind unless for religious reasons is no exception to the racism. The ban of du-rags is disguised under "professionalism" but is really a push for assimilation; being that du-rags are critical for maintaining waves, a beautiful intricate hairstyle specific to Black culture.

So, what is the real reason we can't wear them? Even the ban of baseball caps does not produce anything

In a TikTok and Instagram Reel, Xavier students show off their best outfits during the first week of classes. The video, created by senior Destinee Kerr, was filmed on the yard during Live Music Friday festivities. It highlights fashion on a historically Black campus. Later, the video went viral and garnered attention from popular social media accounts. The original post received 750 likes on Instagram. It also was reposted across numerous historically Black institution support pages.

Photos courtesy of Destinee Kerr