

MLK Day of honor and celebration, say Hampton U. students

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By Carlton Griffin

The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a celebration of black excellence at its finest, and as a result most HBCUs [historically black colleges and universities] have some sort of program honoring his life and legacy. Hampton University will commence its annual MLK Day March on Monday, Jan. 16, at 10:30 a.m. Students are encouraged to attend as it not mandatory.

Jaelin McGull, a senior marketing major from St. Louis, plans to attend. He believes that King was an influential figure in his life and had a huge part in placing us in the state that black America is in now. "Obviously, we still have a lot to do, but progress is one step at a time," he said.

As for a handful of other students interviewed, some said yes, they will attend, some said no, some were still undecided.

Britney Bailey, a senior strategic communication major from McDonough, Georgia, said she will not be attending because she has been there before and the event gets repetitive. She believes there is more that could be done to make the event more enjoyable. "His life and legacy could be celebrated differently than marching from Point A to Point B," she said.

Allie-Ryan Butler, an assistant dean in the Scripps Howard School, said that event could use something different to attract more students, but encourages students to still attend the event as it is important to remember King during this peaceful transition of power as the first black president leaves office. "It is imperative that students attend this event, considering the state of Black America," said. Butler, adding he would like to see a panel discussion led by the new generation of activists on the current state of Black America as he thinks this would be a nice addition to the march.

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Several students interviewed have much anticipation for the annual MLK Day march and program on Monday. The march will start at the Emancipation Oak national landmark, where the slaves were read the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The program will be held in Ogden Hall, where **Michael Anthony Battle**, the former U.S. Ambassador to the African Union, will speak.

Battle once served as the dean of the University Chapel at Hampton University and pastor of the University's Memorial Church.

"I'm sure former Ambassador Battle will deliver a stellar speech while commemorating Dr. King's legacy," said Jolie Jemmott, a sophomore student

leader and nursing major from Philadelphia. "It's great to know that he was once a part of Hampton's staff and I'm glad he is returning to deliver this speech,"

Others students believe MLK Day is a day to honor and serve Dr. King's legacy. Dr. King's frequently appeared in the media for speaking out against racial injustices and leading peaceful protests.

"Dr. King was a great community leader and made it OK to speak for what he believed in," said Brittany Bailey, a senior strategic communications major from McDonough, Georgia. "We can relive his work and honor him by doing community service."

Photo and additional reporting by Leondra Head. Both students are in the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications.