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## Bynum named JSU president, meets with alumni, students

Jimmie E. Gates , The Clarion-Ledger Published 3:06 p.m. CT May 31, 2017 | Updated 15 hours ago



(Photo: Sarah Warnock, For the Clarion-Ledger)

Students and Jackson State University alumni made it clear Wednesday that the College Board's decision to name Mississippi Valley State University president to lead JSU is a forced marriage they don't want.

William Bynum met with and heard from students, alumni and others during sessions on JSU's campus.

With the fervor of a Baptist minister, Bynum attempted to win over students and alumni, saying he is a God-fearing, God-loving man, who believes in faith, family and the future of higher of higher education.

Earlier Wednesday, a group of black lawmakers filed a lawsuit in Hinds County Chancery Court to try to block the College Board from naming Bynum, saying the board hasn't lived up to the settlement agreement in the

Ayers discrimination case.

**More:** [Jackson State proposes slashing workers. programs \(/story/news/2017/05/31/jackson-state-university-proposing-slash-employees-and-programs-due-budget-woes/354659001/\)](/story/news/2017/05/31/jackson-state-university-proposing-slash-employees-and-programs-due-budget-woes/354659001/)

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Bynum said no one will question his work ethic, and he will change people's mind about him leading the state's largest historic black college through his work and visibility..

However, Jauan Knight, a JSU student, told Bynum during his session with students "We have a lot of concerns about your selection ... It seems like you weren't vested in Valley."

Bynum said he was following God's will when he went to Valley.

"Not one Valley alumni has said I sold you out," Bynum said. "Valley's family is OK with me."

Knight, vice chairman of the student conduct committee at JSU, told Bynum: "People at JSU would prefer you stay at Mississippi Valley State University."

Recent JSU graduate Deandrae Powell said JSU needs a person to stand up for it and that he doesn't believe Bynum will do that with the College Board, also referred to as the Institutions of Higher Learning.

Bynum said that in his four years at Valley, no College Board members interfered in any of his decisions or made any request to hire or fire anyone.

"I know I may not be your choice, and that's your choice," Bynum said. "The board made a choice, and I accepted. All I say is to watch me work."

During his session with alumni, Bynum heard MVSU alumni Jacqueline Walker blast the College Board, who she said doesn't have the best interest of the state's historic black colleges and universities at heart.

"Why wouldn't IHL leave you at Mississippi Valley to make a bigger dent?" Walker asked.

In an interview with The Clarion-Ledger, MVSU alumni Wayne Robinson, who was at the JSU session, said Bynum is intelligent and will do a good job at JSU if given the opportunity.

Some JSU alumni said their frustration wasn't personally aimed at Bynum, but said the selection process was flawed.

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"This presidential search bruised and frustrated the JSU family and community," said Floyd Williams, a JSU alumni association official. "We are extremely concerned. We will be watching."

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Bynum said he will work for the best interest of the university. **BENBMAY&UTM\_MEDIUM=NANOBAR&UTM\_SOURCE=BOUNCE-EXCHANGE&UTM\_CAMPAIGN=MEMDAY17&UTM\_CONTENT=BENBMAY)**

"We have to agree that students are foremost," Bynum said. "We don't have to like each other or get along, but we have to take care of students."

Bynum said his first priority will be to get JSU's finances in order, which he said are worse than most people know.

He said the university will have an \$8 million operating deficit at the end of this fiscal year.

The College Board has said about 50 people applied for the JSU presidential job. The board process is secret and no other names of finalists were made public.

Contact [Jimmie E. Gates \(mailto:Jimmie%20E.%20Gates\)](mailto:Jimmie%20E.%20Gates) at 601-961-7212 or [jgates@gannett.com \(mailto:jgates@gannett.com\)](mailto:jgates@gannett.com). Follow him on [Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/Jimmie-E-Gates-999105063482724/\)](https://www.facebook.com/Jimmie-E-Gates-999105063482724/) and [Twitter \(http://twitter.com/jgatesnews\)](http://twitter.com/jgatesnews)

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