



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Visits Cheyney University to Highlight Black History Month and It's On Us PA Programming

West Chester, PA – During a visit to Cheyney University, First Lady Frances Wolf and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Deputy Secretary and Commissioner of the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education Dr. Tanya I. Garcia today celebrated the 185th anniversary of the university and highlighted significant investments in sexual harassment awareness on college campuses through It's On Us PA programming.

"Our historically black colleges and universities have been instrumental to our postsecondary education system by preparing Pennsylvania's students to share their talents with the world. Their excellence is undeniable, and that's why the Wolf Administration continues to push for historical investments in our colleges and universities," said First Lady Frances Wolf. "To truly empower college students to succeed in their educational journey, we must support them both in and out of the classroom, and initiatives like It's On Us PA do just that."

Part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), Cheyney University is one of two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Pennsylvania. Founded in 1837 as the African Institute, the university eventually became known as Cheyney University of Pennsylvania after relocation to businessman George Cheyney's farm in the 1900s.

Cheyney University's Founder's Day celebration highlighted the contributions African Americans have made to the commonwealth and the nation and reiterated the need for continued investments in Pennsylvania's HBCUs.

"Black History is American history, and highlighting the impacts made in our commonwealth and country are vital to understanding how far we have come, and where we must go. Celebrating Black History Month during the 185th birthday of this HBCU is an honor," said Dr. Garcia. "I am proud to highlight Cheyney University's efforts to create safe learning environments for its students and appreciate President Walton's vision."

Cheyney University is one of the two institutions whose graduates are eligible to apply for the [Scholarships from Cheyney - Cheyney University of Pennsylvania](#). Cheyney University graduates must attend a graduate program in a high-demand field such as law, medicine, education, STEM, and more at one of the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) schools or state-related institutions. Qualifying recipients receive free tuition, fees, books, and supplies for their entire program.

The Wolf Administration was invited to highlight It's On Us PA programming at Cheyney University through a roundtable discussion with students and staff focused on progress, program implementation, and ongoing efforts to protect students from sexual violence.

"Today, Cheyney University is proud to celebrate 185 years of educational service as the oldest and first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in America. Black History Month

represents a time when society can recognize and celebrate the impact that African Americans have had on this nation's progress," said President Aaron Walton. "The esteemed products of HBCUs have gone on to serve this country in many facets, further supporting the relevance and impact of these Black institutions of higher learning perhaps more so now than during their inception."

Since 2016, the Wolf Administration has awarded 184 It's On Us PA grants totaling nearly \$6 million to post-secondary institutions, including public and private two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

This past fall, [Gov. Wolf unveiled a four-bill package](#) that will further strengthen protections for students and combat sexual assaults on campuses, including a "yes means yes" law that requires all postsecondary institutions to have policies with clear standards of what is and is not consent; a bill to strengthen protections for victims of on-campus crime; a plan to teach middle and high school students to know and prevent dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking; and legislation that would create a task force to study sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking in grades 6-12 and postsecondary institutions.

The [It's On Us](#) campaign is a national initiative to raise awareness about sexual assault; teaching participants that assault includes non-consensual sex, advising them on how to identify dangerous situations, empowering them to intervene, and urging them to create an environment of support for victims and survivors.

Pennsylvanians are invited to visit the [It's On Us PA](#) page on the governor's website and take the pledge to "recognize that non-consensual sex is sexual assault, identify situations in which sexual assault may occur, intervene in situations where consent has not or cannot be given, and create an environment in which sexual assault is unacceptable and survivors are supported."

"Joining the 'It's On Us PA' Campaign and being the recipient of an 'It's On Us PA' grant has provided Cheyney University the opportunity to develop cross-divisional collaborations that include students, faculty and staff. These collaborations along with data and assessment practices have allowed Cheyney to target its Title IX programming efforts in ways that are directly related to student needs regarding sexual harassment and sexual misconduct," said Director of Title IX and Compliance Dr. Victoria Sanders.

For more information about Pennsylvania's education policies and programs, please visit the [Department of Education's website](#). Follow PDE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), or [Pinterest](#).

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