**UCLA Has More NCAA Championships Than Black Male Freshmen**

Posted: 11/08/2013 5:06 pm EST  |  Updated: 11/08/2013 5:07 pm EST

The black students at University of California, Los Angeles, sent a strong message about diversity at their school. Namely, the fact that there isn't much when it comes to African-American males, a troubling fact for one of the state's most elite institutions.

A group of students, led by Sy Stokes, posted a video voicing their concerns about the number of black students on campus, and their message is hard to ignore. Stokes, a third-year Afro-American studies student [who identifies as black, Cherokee and Chinese](http://youngist.org/post/66141589667/the-black-bruins-ucla-student-sy-stokes), recites a spoken word poem in the video, citing blaring statistics about the university's diversity issue.

[According to the school's enrollment statistics](http://www.admissions.ucla.edu/campusprofile.htm), African-Americans make up 3.8 percent of the student population. In the video, Stokes points out that black males make up 3.3 percent of the male student population, and that 65 percent of those black males are undergraduate athletes. Of the incoming men in the freshmen class, only 1.9 percent of them were black.

[In an interview with the Daily Bruin](http://dailybruin.com/2013/11/08/student-posts-video-to-spark-discussion-about-lack-of-diversity-at-ucla/), Stokes said he almost dropped out of UCLA during his first year because he felt isolated and uncomfortable. Although he eventually found his niche in the minority community, he said he wanted to raise awareness about the school's lack of diversity before the university's application deadline on Nov. 30. “We had to do something to put our issues on the map,” Stokes said.

In an email statement to the school paper, Janina Montero, vice chancellor of student affairs, said administrators acknowledge the need for more diversity and are attempting to work within the state's admission parameters.

“We certainly recognize that the low numbers of African Americans and other underrepresented students on campus does lead to a sense of isolation and invisibility,” Montero said in her email statement. “It is difficult to eliminate this painful imbalance without considering race in the admissions process.”

The state of California voted down affirmative action in 1996 and passed Proposition 209, which banned state schools from considering race, gender, ethnicity or national origins in their admissions processes. [Black student enrollment has severely decreased](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5563891) since that provision and critics are saying that has to change.

The students' video adds to the ongoing affirmative action debate both inside and outside of the state, raising awareness about diversity at institutions around the country. Stokes said he feels responsible for spreading the word about the unknown challenges of being a minority student at UCLA and the ongoing lack of diversity on campus.

"Being the cousin of Arthur Ashe, I feel as though it is my responsibility to uphold the strong voices of the Black Bruin community," he said. This school has experienced unacceptable instances of injustice recently, and many people are not aware of what is happening at this university."