

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)

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<https://www.uncnphc.com/>

The stated purpose and mission of the organization in 1930 was "Unanimity of thought and action as far as possible in the conduct of Greek letter collegiate fraternities and sororities, and to consider problems of mutual interest to its member organizations." Early in 1937, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and became known as "The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated." Visit <https://www.uncnphc.com/> to learn more.

Carolina is home to eight historically African American fraternities and sororities which are governed by the UNC-Chapel Hill chapter of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. These organizations are service-oriented and conduct philanthropic events and hands-on community projects in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

NPHC organizations host a variety of social, service and cultural programs throughout the year aimed at educating members of the Carolina community and uplifting all people in the community-at-large. NPHC sponsors the annual Homecoming Step Show in November as well as programs such as "Meet the Greeks" to educate new students about the different historically Black Greek letter organizations on campus. NPHC also plans service projects, fundraisers, and social events such as tutoring youth, AIDS awareness activities, and cook-outs in the spring. NPHC hosts a NPHC week in the spring featuring events such as: a council-wide awards ceremony, College Preparation service project, and council dinner.

Below is a video of Donovan Livingston, a member of the Xi Gamma chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., speaking at Harvard's graduation.

[Show Video Transcript](#)

Good afternoon. Good afternoon. How is everyone doing today? Good. Good.

So greetings friends, family, faculty, staff, alumni and the illustrious Class of 2016, make some noise!

So my name is Donovan Livingston and I came to address you in the best way I know how but you have to forgive me, I have to take this moment in for a little while.

When I spoke in my high school graduation several years ago, my high school English teacher threatened to replace me on the program or cut my microphone which he found out that I was interested in doing upon as a part of my remarks. So I am eternally grateful for being able to share this piece of myself in my most authentic voice with you this afternoon.

So spoken word poetry, it insists on participation, so if you feel so compelled, snap, clap, throw up your hands, rejoice, celebrate. Class of 2016 this is your address and this is your day.

Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin,
Is a great equalizer of the conditions of men.? ? Horace Mann, 1848.

At the time of his remarks I couldn't read, I couldn't write.

Any attempt to do so, punishable by death.

For generations we have known of knowledge's infinite power.

Yet somehow, we've never questioned the keeper of the keys ?

The guardians of information.

Unfortunately, I've seen more dividing and conquering

In this order of operations ? a heinous miscalculation of reality.

For some, the only difference between a classroom and a plantation is time.

How many times must we be made to feel like quotas ?

Like tokens in coined phrases? ?

?Diversity. Inclusion?

There are days I feel like one, like only ?

A lonely blossom in a briar patch of broken promises.

But hey, I've always been a thorn in the side of injustice.

Disruptive. Talkative. A distraction.

With a passion that transcends the confines of my consciousness ?

Beyond your curriculum, beyond your standards.

I stand here, a manifestation of love and pain,

With veins pumping revolution.

I am the strange fruit that grew too ripe for the poplar tree.

I am a DREAM Act, Dream Deferred incarnate.

I am a movement ? an amalgam of memories America would care to forget

My past, alone won't allow me to sit still.

So my body, like the mind

Cannot be contained.

As educators, rather than raising your voices

Over the rustling of our chains,

Take them off. Un-cuff us.

Unencumbered by the lumbering weight

Of poverty and privilege,

Policy and ignorance.

I was in the 7th grade, when Ms. Parker told me,

?Donovan, we can put your excess energy to good use!?

And she introduced me to the sound of my own voice.

She gave me a stage. A platform.

She told me that our stories are ladders

That make it easier for us to touch the stars.

So climb and grab them.

Keep climbing. Grab them.

Spill your emotions in the big dipper and pour out your soul.

Light up the world with your luminous allure.

To educate requires Galileo-like patience.

Today, when I look my students in the eyes, all I see are constellations.

If you take the time to connect the dots,

You can plot the true shape of their genius ?

Shining in their darkest hour.

I look each of my students in the eyes,

And see the same light that aligned Orion's Belt

And the pyramids of Giza.

I see the same twinkle

That guided Harriet to freedom.

I see them. Beneath their masks and mischief,

Exists an authentic frustration;

An enslavement to your standardized assessments.

At the core, none of us were meant to be common.

We were born to be comets,

Darting across space and time ?

Leaving our mark as we crash into everything.

A crater is a reminder that something amazing happened here ?

An indelible impact that shook up the world.

Are we not astronomers ? searching for the next shooting star?

I teach in hopes of turning content, into rocket ships ?

Tribulations into telescopes,

So a child can see their potential from right where they stand.

An injustice is telling them they are stars

Without acknowledging night that surrounds them.

Injustice is telling them education is the key

While you continue to change the locks.

Education is no equalizer ?

Rather, it is the sleep that precedes the American Dream.

So wake up, wake up! Lift your voices

Until you've patched every hole in a child's broken sky.

Wake up every child so they know of their celestial potential.

I've been a Black hole in the classroom for far too long;
Absorbing everything, without allowing my light escape.
But those days are done. I belong among the stars.
And so do you. And so do they.
Together ? together we can inspire galaxies of greatness
For generations to come.
No, no, sky is not the limit. It is only the beginning.
Lift off.

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