

# Letter: SIU black students facing increased racism

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CARBONDALE — A letter from one student official issued campus-wide claims black students at SIU have “experienced more pure, unadulterated racism in one semester” than in recent years combined.

Kwalee Kemp, coordinator for the Black Affairs Council, wrote the letter after learning about racially charged graffiti left on one of the campus greenhouses last week. Kemp said problems for black students at SIU are more numerous than a couple incidents and noted the administration has done little to quell fears the campus community is unwelcoming to black students.

A statement released by Chancellor Rita Cheng late last week said she is “disturbed” by the graffiti, as well as news of potentially other incidents motivated by race.

“The university has a long and well established commitment to cultural and ethnic diversity, which we continue to celebrate and enhance through new initiatives and programs,” Cheng’s message said. “Ours is a campus of inclusiveness, not intolerance.”

Kemp said black students have been harassed by other students and even university employees this fall, but her letter also points out the students have also received questionable treatment from Carbondale city police, particularly during an Aug. 26 house party that was the subject of a city Human Rights Commission hearing earlier this month.