

Memorandum: to members of the Executive Committee
Board of Managers

From Robert D. Cross

Black Students at Swarthmore

I propose the following as an outline for discussion; all the topics are ~~xxx~~ inter-related, of course, and ~~all~~ are more or less emotionally charged.

- 1) The Number admitted each year. (In 1968-9, a goal of 25 was set for this year, rising perhaps to 35 in subsequent years. In fact, 31 were enrolled in the freshman class this year.) Should we have a goal, or a quota, or a floor? * Financial considerations will certainly play a part in this decision, as a high percentage (though not all) require substantial support.
2. Should we continue to seek out, add admit, some "unconventionally qualified?" Faculty action last year recommended this for only one year at a time, and set the number at 10. The academic record made by these students is neither distinguished nor notoriously bad, and the faculty will find it difficult, on this short experience, to discontinue the practice. But, again, it is quite expensive, in fellowship money alone.
- 3) Special programs are probably necessary.
 - a) A very small-scale post-enrollment support program in language skills was begun this fall, continued this spring by faculty action, and there is a Curriculum Committee report favoring continuation next year. Some credit (up to 1½) is allowed for this work, at the discretion of the instructor. Does this dilute our total degree requirements?
 - b) Last year, there was acceptance of a summer pre-support program for unconventionally qualified students admitted; but none was mounted. This year, there has been considerable planning for such a program, in prospect with Haverford and Bryn Mawr, and some progress made in securing foundation and government support. But not everyone is convinced of the intellectual usefulness, or the social consequences of such a program. I have a hunch that we probably must try something this year, in deference to the resolution last year, and the expectations developed widely this year.
- 4) Special personnel and facilities.
 - a) We have appointed an admissions officer, and a counsellor with special, but not exclusive responsibilities for black students.
 - b) We have appointed a Director of Black Studies, a qualified member of the Political Science Department; I hope that we can pace the number of further appointments in this area to the demand which has been considerable, but not overwhelming.
 - c) We have been led to give a "favored" position in competition for regular academic appointments to black candidates. There have not been many, and we perhaps ought to do more to get some more on board. (There will be some financial cost involved, as the competition is severe.)
 - d) A Black Cultural Center has been in existence since the fall, with SASS given first call on Lodge 4. There has been a considerable escalation of interest, and rhetoric, by SASS in favor of something more separate and more ample. Part of this stems, I think, from the fact that Lodge 4 is not very good-sized, part from the loneliness reportedly felt by a good number of the larger number of black students here, and partly (conversely) from the disappointment felt

by some SASS leaders at their inability to hold together this larger number of black students. ~~Myxxnllkxguxxxnxxkxxxdmxx~~ At any rate the passion is real enough among a significant number of blacks, and I have not yet been able to promise anything that is satisfactory to them for next fall. They have set their sights on one of the college-owned houses (Woolman, Ashton, or Robinson), though not to use as a ^{black} dormitory which I have, and still do oppose. We do need to use these buildings as dormitories, and they are poorly located in any case for a Black Cultural Center, ~~xxxxxx~~ because of their proximity to the village. Something will need to be worked out in this area; it is explosive.

5) Degree of autonomy from regular college institutions.

Some is inevitable, witness the need to create last year the Ad Hoc Black Admissions Committee. But this committee has not had an easy course this year, polarizing to a degree among white and black members, and not easily related to the regular Admissions Office, or to the Curriculum Committee; Gil Stott has done yeoman service in bridging this division, but not without some really uncomfortable situations.

Though a ~~Blk~~ black student now sits on Student Council (as Treasurer), some SASS leaders feel that their regular activities funds should not be submitted to Council, which is a white students' organization.

Apparently, the more militant SASS leaders feel they should relate to the College primarily through the President, on the basis of exceptions. But they are reluctant to meet or correspond with me, except to present "requests."

6) A Goal of a multi-racial campus? As I said in my Collection speech in September, there do not seem to be campuses which provide very successful models. And there seems to be considerable evidence that other societal institutions - and society as a whole - are probably moving towards more tense relationships. As a result, my hunch is that Swarthmore cannot start with a clear goal, but rather work empirically, trying to combine understanding of the special needs and concerns of the black students, with the requirement that black students try to understand the institutional needs ~~of~~ and aspirations of the College.