

3/5/70

To: RDC

From: CEG

Re: Black Cultural Center

We didn't get to your memo of March 3 on this subject at yesterday's staff meeting, and I miss the benefit of general discussion for my own thinking; but I do want to give you whatever comments I usefully can.

I don't know what has happened since we last discussed this subject, and I take it there is no point in commenting on the letter from SASS that we talked about some time ago: I understand you circulated a draft response for comment, and I assume you have sent it and that we're now in some decidedly later stage of the dialog that reflects some further developments I don't know about. I will say that I was much less concerned about the tone and rhetoric of the SASS letter I saw than I was about some of the concrete points in it; and I would have hoped that any response by you would have rebutted those points decently but definitely as to our budgetary procedures, our normal student procedures, the failure of SASS to give you last fall the specifications you sought for expenditure, and several other points that slip my mind at the moment (I don't have the SASS letter with me here at home).

I can agree that Lodges 5-6 are less than ideal. And perhaps we have to settle on something else soon, before decisions about the fraternity houses can be made. I'm sorry, at least provisionally, if that is so, since I have some reservations about Cunningham House. When Bob Barr suggested that CH might serve as a faculty club and facility for visitors last fall it was said that the building was not structurally suitable: that, specifically, it lacked bathrooms, and that it was not sound enough structurally to be worth remodelling. I take it the requirements for a Black Cultural Center are not identical to those of a faculty club and facility for visitors, but I assume there are some similarities; and I wonder whether the reservations Ed Cratsley expressed about the ~~fix~~ latter use last fall wouldn't apply to the former use also. Further, I wonder about the relation between the Scott Foundation and a Black Cultural Center: would these two uses be sufficiently insulated from one another to avoid serious inconvenience? Finally, I wonder whether a building of such prominence on the campus makes sense as a location for a show of fundamental pluralism.

I hope we can think some about the desirability of the Clossons living in the Black Cultural Center, though I can see desirable features in this proposal and I suppose it is basically up to the Clossons. I'm much less easy about officing the Black Counselor and, especially, the Director of Black Studies there. I think the kind of curricular integration we're seeking for Black Studies is probably inconsistent with a Director's office in the Black Cultural Center, and I would hope the Director's personal and professional aspirations would also be inconsistent with this. If the Black Counselor is to have an office there I'd hope it would not be his only office: here, too, I take it we're hoping for some integration of roles.

None of these questions tends to settle the issue for me, nor do all of them together. I have tried to think about a faculty home on the fringe of the

campus and not too close to other faculty homes that might become available for this purpose; but the only one that occurs to me is the one the Gilberts now occupy, and I think there is something to be said for retaining that for College bureaucrats or faculty members--though we could readily vacate it if that seemed desirable. Maybe the structural limitations of Cunningham House are a plus in that they tend to foreclose dormitory-like uses. I guess my preference would be for the fraternity house we've discussed because of its location and the analogy of a Black Cultural Center to its previous use.

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