

Minutes of the Black Studies Curriculum Committee.

March 20, 1969. Sharples Dining Hall. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

The faculty having passed the recommendations of the Committee Report, discussion of the Black Studies program continued. Marilyn Allman made several recommendations:

1. Criteria for courses to be considered a part of the Black Studies program. The list of courses attached to the Committee Report should not be considered definitive or valid. Many of those courses deal with black people only peripherally. Only those courses that focus directly on black people as the main subject of the course should be allowed as credit towards a Black Studies concentration. Not just the title of the course, but the syllabus too must deal with black people. Also, there should be a positive perspective on black people in these courses.

2. Field work. Students wishing to concentrate in Black Studies should be required to have some first-hand experience with contemporary black life. The concentration should not be able to be fulfilled with a set of entirely academic requirements, but some kind of field work (eg. in a ghetto) should be required so that the student will have first-hand knowledge, understanding and feeling about black life. Mr. Wright suggested that courses might naturally divide into two groups--those that are purely academic, and those that require field work. Students might be required to take courses from both groups. There is also the possibility of off-campus work. Field work might seem to be most appropriate to the social sciences, but would be relevant also in the arts where folk culture, music, language and dialects could be studied in the field.

3. In courses dealing peripherally with Black studies and taught by white teachers, some attempt should be made to include a presentation of black perspective

in the course--either by assigned readings by black writers or possibly through the use of black students as discussion leaders (with monetary compensation or a reduced schedule that term). If possible this should be tried out this semester. This seemed like a good idea but would have to be left up to the individual teacher.

4. We should not offer a concentration in Black Studies until we have enough real black studies courses. It is important to keep the standard high and prevent the concentration from becoming merely a title.

5. Administration of the program. Marilyn thought that the program would be best administered by a black person (appointed by the President), but until we find someone suitable this Committee could act as interim administrator. Mr. Wright said that department chairmen and faculty are also involved in the administration of the program. It is important to remember that Black Studies is not a separate major but a concentration within an existing major, and that many of the courses will serve a dual purpose--one in the Black Studies program, one in the regular major offering. Formally the program is administered by the departments. It was agreed, however, that the Committee should continue to discuss the nature of the program. Given the membership of the Committee it seems likely that anything we agree on will be accepted by all the departments involved.

6. Distribution requirement. Can some Black Studies courses be included in the distribution requirement, either within the existing categories or as a separate group? This would have to be brought before the Curriculum Committee. Mr. Wright pointed out that this involves some problems: a course which meets the distribution requirement but not the pre-requisite requirements within its department is a dead end in that a student would have to take the pre-requisite course in order to take any upper courses. Again, the double role of Black Studies courses must be kept in mind.

7. We should prepare a statement on Black Studies for the College Catalogue.