

Meeting of the Black Studies Curriculum Committee.

Wednesday, November 13, 1968, 5:30 - 7:15 p.m., Sharples Dining Hall.

Members present: Mr. Pierson, Mr. Wright, Mr. Van Til, Mr. and Mrs. Legesse, Mr. Shackford, Al Dietrich, Clint Etheridge, Marilyn Allman, Marilyn Holifield, Don Mizell.

Mr. Pierson's "Report of the Black Studies Curriculum Committee" was discussed. Discussion focused on the role of students in interviewing candidates ("Report", page 5, last two paragraphs). General faculty opinion on this issue tends to be very skeptical indeed. Any student veto power, black or white, would be rejected by the faculty.

What students would be involved in interviewing candidates? In the Religion and Biology departments, which already do this, it is the majors. But since Black Studies is not a separate department, there are no majors. Mr. Van Til suggested that all majors in the department in question and all Black Studies concentrators (in all departments) be invited to meet with candidates. Mr. Wright said that SASS views were more important for moonlighters, where the course would be a one shot deal, than for full-time faculty, where only a part of the candidate's time would be devoted to Black Studies (views of department majors would be more relevant here). Marilyn Holifield said that many black teachers would not accept a position here without meeting black students. Mr. Wright said that no chairman would reject such a request. Marilyn Holifield said that black students have walked out of Mr. Hershberg's course at Penn. He is, however, trying to improve his course and is calling people in Philadelphia to find out what he can do. Mr. Wright thought that this was a real threat to a Black Studies program at Swarthmore. Marilyn said that black students here are not interested in protesting but in building a program.

Possible student groups that might be involved in interviewing candidates are: SASS, student members of this committee (but not faculty members), prospective Black Studies concentrators (we could draw up a list right away), departmental majors, or any combination of these groups.

Mr. Wright said that we should not be too specific, we should not try to tell departments how they must go about hiring people. It is all hortatory any way-- "help" (last sentence of "Report") can mean whatever you wish, and all we are getting is a hope. It was generally agreed that we should make suggestions in the report, but that we will have to leave it up to the individual departments to decide how to act on these suggestions.

What shall we do now? Mr. Pierson will take the report to the Council on Educational Policy to get their reaction to it. Mr. Pierson felt that the Council's attitude was extremely important--if the Council supports the report, it will probably be passed by the faculty. The Council can also give us advice on how to procede--whether or not to present the report to the entire college (eg. by an all college mailing) before taking it before faculty.

There was further discussion of the "Report". Clint Etheridge^{and others} felt that there should be more emphasis on black perspective and black teachers as a priority. We should not aim for a "balanced view" but a "black view" in Black Studies (page 4 of "Report", under Staff Recruitment), at least as an ideal, even if it will never be fully possible at Swarthmore. Our first official word (to which people will refer) ought to be stronger and closer to our ideals. A Black Studies program dominated by black perspective would be the proper "balance" to the white, pro-status quo courses in the rest of the curriculum.

Mr. Pierson pointed out that faculty attitude towards Black Studies as a separate or distinct perspective would be very negative. What we must try for is a broadening of perspective throughout the curriculum. The heart of the matter is to get the people here who will start the program and carry it through. This will be the real change at Swarthmore.

Marilyn Allman said that what we want is a strong program for black students at Swarthmore. The present "Report" is working for a real program and the important thing is to get it started, not how the report is worded precisely. We should try to get what we can. Once we get a real program here, there is lots we can do to exert influence.

We will meet again on Wednesday, November 20, 1968, at 6:00 p.m. in Sharples.

Appended to the minutes: Mr. Pierson's "Report of the Black Studies Curriculum Committee."