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SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
SWARTHMORE  
PENNA. 19081

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

FREDERICK A. HARGADON  
Dean of Admissions

August 14, 1968

TO: Frank C. Pierson  
FROM: Fred Hargadon F.H.  
SUBJECT: Recruiting Disadvantaged Students

Your summary notes of our informal meeting with the members of Upward Bound staff will be useful to me when I raise the entire matter of policy in this area with the Admissions Committee this Fall. As you know, this item was placed at the top of our agenda for this year as a result of my remarks on the problems and prospects in recruiting Negro students in faculty meeting last May.

As you also know, those of us in admissions have gone on record over four years ago on the matter of recruiting Negro students, and in fact have been relatively successful in translating our stated beliefs into reality, by increasing the number of Negro students enrolled at Swarthmore from 2 or 3 to about 50. Because of this record in admissions, and because my remarks to the faculty in May were meant to convey apprehension about the future rather than any immediate problem, I think it may be somewhat gratuitous for faculty members to "go on record" for recruitment of disadvantaged students at this stage of the game and at the same time somewhat premature for us to scramble after some special program of recruitment - at least until we have assessed what we have already done in the past five years and measured the gap between that and whatever goals are set forth by the admissions committee.

One of the things we discussed among ourselves at the meeting the other day but which was not included in your notes was the general agreement that whatever approach we take to recruitment of disadvantaged students in the future, we ought to be sure that we are working primarily to enhance their lives, and ought to avoid insofar as possible simply trying to recruit for the sake of having a certain number or percentage of them at the College. I reiterate this because I think it is very important to keep in mind, and because John Morrow felt especially strongly about it. I will of course cover such matters as these more thoroughly in my report to the Admissions Committee on the recruitment of disadvantaged students.

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Until the Admissions Committee has had the opportunity to deal with this problem, to review thoroughly what we have already done about it, and to think through the complex issues involved, I think it would be presumptuous of any other group, formal or informal, to undertake this problem as their own. As Chairman of the Admissions Committee, I know that we will welcome any suggestions and advice that the faculty has to offer, particularly in any area in which those of us who have been dealing with the problems are not knowledgeable.

While I will proffer to the Admissions Committee the same proposal which I raised with all of you, that of identifying local students for a special seminar at the College during the year, there are a number of others I will also ask them to explore. Given your special interest in this matter this summer, I will not only try to catch you up on what we have been doing in this area for the past four years, but also keep you posted on our deliberations this Fall.

The whole matter of recruitment of disadvantaged students for Swarthmore, as susceptible as it is to "heart on the sleeve" approaches, is one to which we ought to apply all of the wisdom and understanding of which we are capable, however loud the clamor may be that surrounds the issue. Perhaps it is only those of us who have been closest to the problem in recent years who despair of the hasty, heavily publicized, rather crude and thoughtless approaches, with which we are familiar, which many colleges and universities have undertaken to recruit Negro students. Since Swarthmore certainly does not need to "prove" itself on this issue, I am hopeful that we will be able to act with wisdom on behalf of those students whom we seek to educate. As I have mentioned to you previously, I think it would be ungracious, certainly completely unwarranted, for the membership of the Committee on Black Studies, set up as it was to deal with making our curriculum more relevant to black students, to act as any sort of pressure group on the Admissions Committee.

CC: Courtney Smith  
John Morrow  
Edward Skeath