

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA

February 12, 1969

To Alumni, Parents of Swarthmore students, and Friends of Swarthmore:

We send this report to you to inform you of what has been happening at Swarthmore during the past few weeks. It is a presentation of the issues involved and of the actions that have been taken by the Faculty and Board of Managers.

For a number of years, the College has been able to achieve a significant increase in the number of black students enrolled at Swarthmore. Such efforts were supported by our own students who visited high schools on behalf of the College and were intensified and given increased effectiveness through the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in the spring of 1964. While the College had been relatively successful in enrolling more black students, Frederick A. Hargadon, Dean of Admissions, informed the Faculty last spring that the conditions under which such recruitment took place had changed significantly in the past two years.

In the decade from 1953 to 1963, the average number of black students in each class had been two; in the next five years the average in each class climbed to 12, and in the Class of 1969, 19 black students were enrolled as freshmen. In the past three years, in spite of vigorous recruitment efforts, the number enrolled has declined. It was only 10 in each of the present junior and sophomore classes, and the figure dropped to 8 in the present freshman class.

In discussing this complex problem before the Faculty last spring, Dean Hargadon pointed out that among the many factors involved, two stood out: a major increase in the number of colleges and universities actively seeking to enroll large numbers of black students, and the relative constancy of the size of the pool of black graduates of secondary schools who could meet the admissions requirements of colleges like Swarthmore. As a result, he said, Swarthmore found it increasingly difficult to maintain the success which characterized its recent efforts in this area.

The College's efforts in recruiting black students over the past five years were reviewed in a report drawn up over the past summer by Dean Hargadon. The report discussed the problems and prospects to be faced by the College in its efforts to recruit black students in the future and suggested various policy alternatives to be considered. The Admissions Policy Committee adopted the report as its working paper and proceeded immediately to seek additional information on the problem from a variety of sources. The Committee asked the black students currently enrolled at Swarthmore for their ideas, it solicited information from other colleges and universities who were concerned with the same problems, and it familiarized itself with existing special programs aimed at increasing the pool of qualified black applicants.

The Committee studied the problem throughout the semester and in December produced a set of policy recommendations for discussion by the Faculty, administration, and student body. Eleven recommendations in the report sought ways in which the College could:

- (1) Assure an increased enrollment of black students at Swarthmore
- (2) Use its resources to make whatever appropriate contributions it might toward increasing the number of black students able to go on to college in general throughout the country

- (3) More satisfactorily respond to those particular needs, both academic and social, deemed to be uniquely theirs by the black students already enrolled in the College.

In the meantime, on December 23, the Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society (SASS) sent to President Courtney Smith a letter setting forth its "demands" regarding black admissions. They were directed at increasing "the enrollment of black students in order to achieve the critical mass necessary to sustain a viable healthy black student population." Specific steps called for were intensified recruitment efforts in order to increase the number of black students at Swarthmore to one hundred and fifty within the next six years and the enrollment of between ten and twenty so-called "risk" black students for next year. SASS asked for pre-enrollment and post-enrollment "support" programs for black students to enable them to meet the College's academic standards, and for the recruitment of black transfer students. And finally SASS asked for the appointment of a black assistant dean of admissions and for a black counselor.

On January 9, the day members of SASS occupied the Admissions Office, these demands were extended to include a request for a complete identification and description of the decision-making organs of the College, participation by black people in policy making on all levels, and the pledge that no disciplinary action be taken against the black students who were participating in the direct action.

The recommendations of the Admissions Policy Committee Report and the demands of SASS in regard to the recruitment and enrollment of black students were not dissimilar. The Faculty, in addressing itself to these problems, considered the two documents simultaneously - a procedure which had been proposed to SASS members by President Smith before SASS's direct action. The Faculty agreed to use the SASS demands to draw up agendas but to keep both documents constantly in front of them.

The Admissions Policy Committee report called for the College to "continue to recruit vigorously" the best qualified black secondary school graduates, and urged the College to strive for a "minimum of twenty" black students in each freshman class. It called for enrolling, as an experiment, a small number of students (somewhere between five and ten) who, "while they fall just below our normal admissions standards, are believed to possess other qualities which will enable them to 'close the gap' in their academic preparation through individually tailored programs during their freshman year, or longer if necessary."

The Admissions Policy Committee Report also advanced four proposals for enhancing the opportunities for all black students to attend college: that the College continue its Upward Bound Program and its participation in programs such as the College Bound Corporation of Philadelphia, and that it consider establishing a summer program similar to A Better Chance Program and a one-evening-a-week seminar program on campus for able, socio-economically deprived eleventh and/or twelfth grade students from local secondary schools.

In regard to black student life at Swarthmore, the Admissions Policy Committee Report recognized the need for black adults within the College community with whom black students could seek counseling, recommended "some informal process" whereby unique needs of black students could find expression and support, and urged campus organizations such as Student Council and the Cooper Foundation Committee to be aware of the need for activities largely black in orientation.

In a series of almost continuous meetings between January 9 and January 13, the Faculty accomplished the major part of its job concerned with these two documents. The first resolution, passed the evening of January 9, read: "The Faculty, in the midst of acting on the problems of black admissions and a black curriculum, finds itself faced with a resort to force and a refusal to make use of rational procedures. The Faculty deplures the use of force and plans to continue the orderly consideration of the problems to which it was addressing itself when the Admissions Office was occupied. It invites all members of the College community to work toward

the resolution of the present crisis." As one faculty member put it, "Our awareness of the crisis situation caused us to move more rapidly, but we did not simply meet demands. We did what we felt was right."

The ensuing resolutions passed by the Faculty regarding specific procedures for recruiting and enrolling black students answered a concern expressed by SASS and shared by the Faculty that the College achieve "a viable healthy black student population." The Faculty resolved that the College strive to enroll a minimum of 25 black students in each freshman class and expressed the hope that this number could be increased to 35 after a three-year period.

To attain this goal, the Faculty proposed the appointment of a black admissions officer and called for the College to "vigorously extend its recruitment of the best black secondary school graduates," recruit black students from community and junior colleges, and set as its goal the enrollment of a "significant number (approximately 10) of black students whose qualifications are outside normal admissions criteria for the year 1969-70." The Faculty emphasized that no lowering of academic standards at the College was anticipated or intended. One faculty member commented: "We had no intention of taking in people who can't do the work. We wanted to provide some flexibility in admissions, not at graduation."

In its consideration of the problem of increasing black enrollment at colleges and universities throughout the country, the Faculty resolutions followed closely the substance of the Admissions Policy Committee Report, at the same time meeting certain concerns expressed in the SASS demands. The Faculty resolved that the College negotiate with institutions conducting summer enrichment programs for entering freshmen so that students accepted by Swarthmore could attend such programs and that it negotiate with private secondary schools to arrange that black students who need further preparation may attend such a school for a year on scholarship.

In regard to black student life at Swarthmore, the third main area of concern of the Admissions Policy Committee Report, the Faculty supported a recommendation of the report by urging Student Council and other organizations to be aware of the need for activities largely black in orientation. Further, the Faculty supported the appointment of a black administrative officer to be primarily available to black students for confidential advice and guidance.

The Faculty ended its series of meetings of January 9 to 13 with resolutions (1) urging the President and the Board to secure the necessary funds to carry out its actions; (2) affirming the statement made by President Smith in his letter of December 31 that "this College has never been and must never be governed by demands or moved by threats"; (3) noting that "faculty resolutions made on the basis of the SASS document of 23 December 1968 and the report of the Admissions Policy Committee have been accepted because the Faculty believes they are right"; and (4) announcing that "the College does not contemplate disciplinary action for the SASS actions that are presently known to it." The Faculty also stated that it "authorized the participation of black people in shaping policies on matters relating directly to the special interests of black students."

During the week of January 13, representatives of SASS were meeting with faculty representatives to clarify certain faculty actions when the College suffered the heavy loss, by sudden death through heart attack, of President Smith on January 16. SASS ended its occupation of the Admissions Office later that day. The occupation had disrupted the work of the Admissions Office but no violence was involved and no records were disturbed or property damaged.

On January 13 President Smith told members of the College community (see page 2 of the enclosed Phoenix for full text): "I strongly support the actions we have taken as a Faculty, and I will strongly support them to the Board of Managers. I am confident that the Board shares the same values and concerns that have motivated the Faculty in our actions." And, indeed, after the Board convened in a special

meeting on January 25, Edward K. Cratsley, acting president, reported to the Faculty "that the Board supports fully the basic educational purposes and objectives of the actions which the Faculty has taken in respect to the problems of black student admissions, counseling and support programs and encourages the Faculty and administration to continue with procedures which are now being followed to resolve and implement further these matters, including any necessary legal aspects."

President Cratsley also reported that the Board expressed its full agreement with the following faculty resolution passed on January 24:

"A college is essentially a free community of scholars dedicated to the pursuit of truth and knowledge through reason and with civility. As the Faculty of Swarthmore College continues to discuss the questions before it, it expects to act in accordance with this principle.

"Recent developments confront the Swarthmore community with an unprecedented situation. It should not be presumed that in the event of future actions outside the framework of normal procedures, decisions taken during the crisis that began on 23 December 1968 are precedents to govern the conduct of the College.

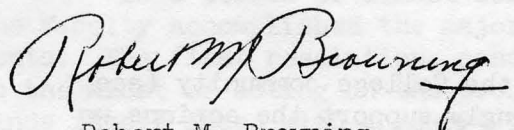
"The Faculty recommends that a joint committee of the Board, administration, Faculty and students be appointed to formulate procedures and substantive principles for application if a future crisis of this kind arises."

As the preparation of this report to you was concluded, the College was undertaking to implement the faculty resolutions. Still on the faculty agenda was the possible establishment of a Black Interest Committee and some clarification of details of action already taken. The appointment of the joint committee of Board, administration, Faculty, and students requested by the Faculty "to formulate procedures and substantive principles for application if a future crisis of this kind arises" has been approved by the Board and is in process. When these findings have been prepared, they will be publicized.

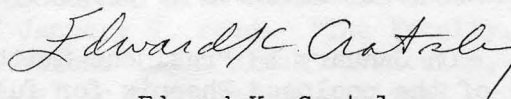
During the seven days in January from the 10th through the 17th, when the pace of events was at its height, the staff of the student newspaper, The Phoenix, worked through the night hours, to publish seven issues of some eight mimeographed pages each, chronicling events of the preceding day. This accurate and responsible reportorial job of a most complex set of issues was indispensable to the College community. On January 29 The Phoenix again appeared in its regular printed format to offer its readers on pages four through six a summary of recent events and also to record some of the documents that resulted from the events. We enclose this comprehensive account for your information.

We are also glad to make available upon request reprints of the complete texts of the December 18 Admissions Policy Committee Report, the December 23 letter of the Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society to President Smith, the December 31 letter of President Smith to the Faculty notifying them of the SASS letter and providing them with background information, and the complete text of the faculty resolutions as of February 5.

The March issue of the Swarthmore Alumni Bulletin will be a memorial issue to President Courtney Smith.



Robert M. Browning
Chairman, Board of Managers



Edward K. Cratsley
Acting President