

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA 19081

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

9 January 1969

To Members of the Board of Managers:

I enclose for your information the following items:

1. A letter from six faculty members sent to their colleagues, and later to all students, dated January 3rd.
2. Gil Stott's memorandum, given to the president of Student Council and a few others, reporting briefly on my meeting with SASS on January 6th.
3. A mailing to the College community from Student Council on January 6th.
- missing* 4. A mailing to the College community by 26 students on January 7th.
5. A mailing, "Why We Can't Wait," sent by SASS to all members of the College community on January 8th.
6. A summary, prepared by David Cowden as Secretary of the Faculty, of the faculty meeting held on January 7th.
7. A mailing sent from Student Council to the College community on January 8th.

Courtney Smith

Also enclosed is a communication dated January 9th just received from SASS.

SASS

*Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society*

Swarthmore College

Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

9 January 1969

To the Administration and Faculty at Swarthmore College:

We have always indicated that our demands were minimal, representing only a first step in achieving our goal of relevant, humanistic education at Swarthmore. Your failure over this extended period of time to end discussion and to begin to implement programs indicates that you too realize that fundamental changes at Swarthmore are called for; changes which you do not want to see made. This frustration has been most instructive for us, for it has shown that our demands as originally stated must be elaborated and extended to insure the fundamental changes which we all recognize are entailed. We want to insure that a relevant education based on human considerations is developed.

We have suspended the customary admissions process of Swarthmore College. This decision-making process has persistently denied black people basic self-representation and must now be drastically changed to reflect a participatory democracy. Our demands must now be re-stated as follows:

- 1) that a complete identification and description of the decision-making organs of the college on every level be made public,
- 2) that black people be participants in policy making on all levels outlined in compliance to the first demand,
- 3) that the original demands be included in the implementation of the first and second demands, the original demands are appended to this letter
- 4) that no disciplinary action whatsoever be taken against black people, both students and employees, who have participated in this direct action.

We have brought to a halt the admissions process which in decision-making has refused black participation. We will no longer tolerate such rebuffs on any level. Until the college submits to us an acceptable program with specific plans for the inclusion of black interests on all levels, there will be a discontinuation of the college's ruthless activities.

You may submit the program to the Swarthmore Afro-American Students Society for our approval.

The Swarthmore Afro-American  
Students Society



Swarthmore College  
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

January 3, 1968

To our fellow faculty members:

The following memorandum is offered in the hope of contributing to a constructive response to the SASS ultimatum, though SASS's demands are presented in terms that are incompatible with acceptable procedures.

The peremptory style of the SASS proposals should not obscure either the real merits of some of them or the necessity of giving careful and thoughtful consideration to the important issues of College policy which they raise. It is regrettable that the SASS leaders have acted (while the College is on vacation) as though the President of Swarthmore College is in a position--or would be willing--to make these decisions by himself. It is also regrettable that SASS has resorted to vilification and even to threats as the means of gaining its ends; and that SASS has made no effort to call its concerns directly to the attention of the whole faculty, without whose strong support its proposals could not be adopted and carried through successfully. Nevertheless, the faculty should be prepared to consider them calmly and objectively, having regard both to the deep and deeply-felt needs that have prompted them and to the values embodied in the educational ideals and achievements of Swarthmore College.

It is important to bear in mind that the SASS statement comes at a time when the two reports--on black admissions and on black studies--are ready for submission to the faculty, and also that sympathy for action on these matters is virtually unanimous. The SASS statement can serve a useful purpose in bringing home to us the urgency of the special problems that black students have in obtaining an opportunity to prepare adequately for college study, and in maintaining their sense of selfhood within largely white environments while living and working at college. But we should not be tempted to set aside rational and democratic methods in our concern to reach a solution of these problems. We have good ways of dealing with our problems, through study, discussion among students, faculty members, and administrative officers, and recommendations to the Board of Managers. The current crisis has not arisen out of faculty indifference to students' needs and interests, or administrative aloofness and refusal to communicate with students or student groups. The best way of meeting it--and of making future crises as healthy and constructive as possible--is to continue to adhere to democratic and rational methods.

Monroe C. Beardsley  
Mark A. Heald  
Helen F. North  
J. Roland Pennock  
Frank C. Pierson  
Peter T. Thompson

6 January 1969

President Smith and I met this morning with 15 members of SASS from 11:00 A.M. until 12:30 P.M.

Clinton Etheridge, Jr., the Chairman of SASS, cited the SASS demands, calling for swift and positive action on the part of the College in accepting these demands.

President Smith spoke to the four numbered points as indicated in his memorandum to faculty members on 31 December 1968. He developed at length the nature and extent of his belief in the underlying concerns of SASS, making explicit his strong personal hope for an increase in the number of black students and faculty members and administrators at the College, the need to create a viable healthy black student population, and the nature of his belief in the importance of self-definition.

President Smith expressed his hope that SASS would now use this moment constructively either by presenting proposals to the Faculty that embody their ideas or by providing a full commentary on the recommendations that have now been sent to all of us by the Admissions Policy Committee.

At the end of the meeting SASS repeated its demands, insisting that President Smith make a strong statement to the Faculty calling for the College to accept and implement SASS's demands. President Smith held to the position described in his memorandum to the Faculty mentioned above, expressing his belief that it is our entire College community, and not SASS alone or the President alone, that must consider conscientiously and imaginatively the best ways to achieve the goals he believes almost everyone in this community wishes to achieve.

Gilmore Stott



January 6, 1969

To: the College Community  
From: Student Council

Student Council met Monday night to discuss recent developments relating to black admissions. We strongly agree with what we find to be common in the two reports. Both favor a substantial increase in the number of black students. Both favor immediate interim steps to increase the number of black students in the class of 1973 (including the admission of "risk" students). Both recognize the need for a more viable life for black students here (including the appointment of black administrators and counselors). These issues are of utmost importance and demand immediate attention and decision. We therefore urge the faculty to establish and make known at its meeting this afternoon a specific timetable concerning the consideration and decision on these crucial issues. This timetable would serve as an indication of your commitment to deal quickly with these matters.

However, we do recognize basic philosophical differences in the two reports, and we realize that these can not be reasonably resolved in the near future. It is imperative that a joint committee be formed consisting of the Admissions Policy Committee, members of SASS, and other students to write a more comprehensive report answering general questions. This committee could call on consultants when it thought it was necessary. We would like faculty commitment today to the formation of this committee.

Signed,  
Student Council

John Braxton  
Lauren Brubaker  
Stephanie Cooley  
Carl Kendall  
Randy Larrimore  
Hank Levy  
Gerard Mare

Mary Noland  
Lyn Peery  
Carol Pixton  
Ellen Schall  
Lyle Snider  
Roger Wood  
Absent: Mike Hattersley

Jan. 7, 1969

To the Swarthmore College Community,

We the undersigned, concerned members of the Swarthmore Community, express our strong support for all of the demands of the SASS letter concerning Black Admissions. Action must be taken now to ensure:

1. an increase in the number of Black students in the class of 1973, including the admission of a significant number of "risk" students,
2. a basic commitment to the presence of a viable Black community at Swarthmore, including the admission of a sufficient number of Black students to support such a community, and the appointment of a Black admissions officer and Black counselors,
3. the inclusion of a significant number of students, especially SASS members, on a committee to formulate a comprehensive statement of philosophy on Black admissions and Black student life.

We feel that the administration has not taken adequate steps to involve students, and especially Black students, in the formulation of the Admissions Policy Committee report on Black admissions and admissions policy in general. We also feel that students must actively discuss the issues raised by the SASS letter and this report and make known to the faculty, administration, and board of managers their views and demands. We feel that if the faculty, administration and board of managers do not make a clear commitment to the basic principles outlined in the SASS letter, which coincides in significant areas with the Admissions Policy Committee Report, that direct action by the student body, and Black students in particular, is both necessary and appropriate.

Hank Levý  
Debby Bone  
Sara Reitman  
Lauren Brubaker  
Joseph Schoenfeld  
Jackie Reuss  
Joe Horowitz  
Jim Browning  
Jon Barber  
Marianne Goldstein  
Claudia Chanlett  
David Hicks  
C. Holyman

Laura Zoloth  
John Braxton  
Candy Putter  
Peter Rush  
Bob Goodman  
Warren Phinney  
Howard Gold  
Jeff Spielberg  
Neil Prose  
Jim Colvin  
David Goodrich  
Chris Howson  
Dan Wasserman



## WHY WE CAN'T WAIT

The first Black student probably came to Swarthmore around 1942. It's hard to track down this precedent-setting history-making event in the Swarthmore area because very little written evidence exists, and this history must be shrouded, therefore, by hearsay, recollection and uncertainty. Before that date, there were a number of frustrated efforts to desegregate the college and break the color line that had existed by gentlemen's agreement. True illustrations may shed light on this point.

In his Memoirs, Charles J. Darlington, 1915, relates the story that his Swarthmore Dean of Men, William A. Alexander, told him of Black admissions at Swarthmore, 1905 style. The college had unknowingly accepted a very light-skinned Negro male because the admissions information was gathered from filled-out questionnaires and from photographs", without the now required interview. As Charles Darlington recounts it:

When he arrived it was found that he was a Negro boy. His picture was shaded in such a way that this fact had not been obvious. The college was in an embarrassing quandary. No Negroes had ever been admitted. As "Alec" said, "It just wasn't done." After much heart searching by the college administration and probably some members of the Board, the boy and his parents were told that an error had been made. The college was very sorry but he could not be permitted to enter.

Everett Lee Hunt in the Revolt of the College Intellectual gives us a glimpse into Depression-style Swarthmore Black admissions. Everett Hunt narrates:

In 1932 a Negro from a Philadelphia High School decided to apply to Swarthmore. He was a prominent athlete; had a good background in classics, his major interest; was president of the student government and popular with his fellows; and, except for his color, was a logical candidate for open scholarship. The admission of colored students had never been approved by the Board of Managers, and so the Admissions Committee referred the application to the Board. After a long discussion it decided by a large majority that Negro students could not yet be admitted to a coeducational college like Swarthmore. Their admission would raise too many problems and create too many difficulties. There was general satisfaction at the happy solution presented by Dean Speight, just arrived from Dartmouth, when he got the boy accepted there with a large scholarship. A men's college seemed just the place for him.

No doubt, its embarrassing for a Quaker school like Swarthmore to have racial skeletons in the closet. The Quakers, one of the first group to come out against slavery, have long had a social activist creed which runs directly counter to the racial skeletons in the closet of Quaker Swarthmore College. The Faith and Practice of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting voices the social concern that Friends have traditionally had in racial justice.

The plight of native races and disadvantaged groups in Africa, India, Asia, Europe and America which so heavily weighted upon the minds and hearts of members of the Commission on Racial Justice, places both a responsibility and opportunity before the Society of Friends. Misunderstandings and bitterness which divide economic groups and national governments rests in no small measure upon race prejudice. If the causes of industrial and international wars are to be removed, effective work must be done in improving the status of disadvantaged groups.

What SASS endeavors by presenting its demands is to close the gap at Swarthmore between faith and practice and thus help the college reach its full potential as an educational institution in the professed service of a better American society. This will come about by providing talented Black youths with the academic competence to function on two levels. Because of its intense and rigorous educational experience, Swarthmore College could be a training ground for Black scholars and Black leaders. Black Swarthmore alumni could one day be working at the frontiers of knowledge in Black studies, doing the new scholarship and unearthing a vital body of knowledge. Swarthmore could give its Black alumni the intellectual discipline and analytic powers to look at the hard, complex issues that Black leadership will encounter in future years. This is the aim of the SASS demands.

In order to be Black scholars and Black leaders, however, Swarthmore Black college students will have to possess viable Black identities, a sense of group pride and destiny which can only come about through individual self-analysis and self-definition. In a predominately white College like Swarthmore, the Black students group plays a very important counter - socialization role in nurturing the viable selfhood for productive. From this goals flows the rationale for Black students at Swarthmore and the legitimacy of SASS.

This is a necessary conclusion that thinking Black students are coming to. Thus SASS enjoys the passive if not the active support of virtually all the Black students on campus. To illustrate this point, after student council endorsed the original SASS demands and certain white administrators were suggesting that SASS was an illegitimate, unrepresentative organization, the group conducted an internal poll and found that all but six of the Black students on the campus were willing to go on record as SASS members. White Swarthmore was shown that some of their best friends are not Negroes.

On a campus that professes to be liberal and enlightened, why does SASS encounter so much resistance and misunderstanding in its goals of self-definition and self-determination for Black people? A great deal of the answer lies in fact that the College suffers from white liberal mind set on race relations. By that we mean that Swarthmore College as an institution has a "Love me, I'm a liberal" approach to race relations that Phil Ochs in Concert satirizes. In other words, because the College was founded under Quaker aegis, and because its administrators raise money for Wade House, and because its faculty helps run Upward Bound,



(3)

and because its students tutor Chester Kids, lily white Swarthmore automatically assumes it's the racial scene and doing the best it can. White liberal Swarthmore has been content to push for racial justice and Black self-determination in Chester, or Philadelphia, or Media, rather than in its own backyard. Black Power is good in Chester, but bad in the campus. The racism of the outer white society stops at the edge of college property, because Swarthmore College, a small Co-educational LIBERAL liberal arts 11 miles southwest of Philadelphia, because the campus community is one big happy racial family.

How long can basically descent people lull themselves into the fragile and status quo complacency of rosy-eyed saccharine existence, where everybody is supposed to be color blind and and unprejudiced? This fantasy world can never exist in a society that was nurtured on racism and in which it still runs rampant. Very few, if any, white people in contemporary America have or can elude the racist virus because it is ubiquitous and deep-seated. But there is one hope, there is a way to work ourselves out of this sad dilemma -to face the hard, cold, cruel reality of the racial crisis.-

Because the vague and accusatory word racist . . . connotes an overt, virulent bigot clubbing poor defenseless Negroes, white liberals concerned with social justice don't like to see the term bandied about. Doubtless, this is a typical Swarthmore reaction. Because some of our best friends are white liberals, many SASS members are careful with their racial labels. Yet to many "Love me" liberals, the term white liberal itself must seem at times an epithet. Whatever the label, all are members of the Master Race in a society in which the legitimated belief in the inferiority of Blacks is deeply ingrained, and pervasive. Every white is not to blame for a racist America, but every white is in some degree responsible.

Thus Swarthmore College, the liberal Quaker school has a responsible to combat racism and advance racial equality. We hope that President Smith and Swarthmore College will not turn their backs on the greater crisis of this century.

SASS proceeds with a clear conscience, can Swarthmore College?

The Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society

S. Brown

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

8 January 1969

To the Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Opening a meeting of the Faculty of Swarthmore College on Tuesday afternoon, 7 January 1969, President Smith announced that the faculty will meet weekly throughout January, and as long as is necessary thereafter, to discuss four important topics in the following order: 1) black admissions policy, 2) the proposed Black Studies program, 3) the proposed Student Week, and 4) the reports of the Student Life Committee and the Expanded Student Affairs Committee.

President Smith, after briefly reviewing the history of the continuing efforts of Swarthmore College to recruit and enroll black students, reported to the faculty on his meeting with SASS on Monday, 6 January 1969, in which he discussed with them their demands made 23 December 1968, and explained more fully his response which was set forth in a memorandum to the faculty on 31 December 1968. He said that SASS had insisted that the President make a strong statement to the Faculty calling for the College to accept and implement SASS's demands.

In the general discussion that followed, a number of faculty members urged that lines of direct communication be opened between the faculty and SASS in order that members of SASS, as well as the student body at large, be made aware of the deep concern felt by the entire faculty over the problem of black admissions at Swarthmore and in order that SASS could discuss these problems with the faculty. It was suggested that members of SASS be invited to a meeting of the faculty to participate in the discussion, or, alternatively, that SASS be invited to hold a forum open to the faculty and members of the student body for such discussion. When it was pointed out that only ten members of the faculty had attended the meeting sponsored by SASS and the Student Council at 12:30 this afternoon (7 January), many members of the faculty indicated that they had not yet received notice of this meeting.

Several members of the faculty, noting the substantial areas of agreement between the demands of SASS and the proposals of the Admissions Policy Committee (30 December 68), suggested that the faculty take immediate action on those proposals on which there was substantial agreement. Others, however, felt that this would represent only token action on the part of the faculty, and that the overall implications of all proposals deserved careful and serious discussion and consideration in the meetings now scheduled.



President Smith said that he felt almost everyone in this community wished to achieve the goals that determine the major thrust of the report of the Admissions Policy Committee and the demands of SASS. He said he was sure there was no disagreement about increasing the number of black students, faculty members, and administrators. A judgment about numbers of high risk students does involve a basic issue to be resolved by the faculty. Swarthmore College has historically defined itself as a college with a highly selected student body and a challenging academic program. In the light of current social urgencies, should the College re-define itself, and if so, to what extent and in what direction?

The faculty decided first to consider the proposals of SASS and of the Admissions Policy Committee, and voted to base its discussion on the SASS demands. In the ensuing lengthy and complex discussion, however, it became apparent that the SASS demands entailed complications and implications that were not immediately apparent and could not be resolved in this first meeting on the subject.

The faculty, however, unanimously passed the following resolution, based upon the memorandum from the Student Council: "We favor a substantial increase in the number of black students. We favor immediate interim steps to increase the number of black students in the class of 1973 (including the admission of "risk" students). We recognize the need for a more viable life for black students here (including the appointment of black administrators and counselors)."

In conclusion, the faculty passed the following motion by a unanimous vote: "That the faculty invite SASS to a meeting with the faculty next Friday between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m., or at their convenience before Friday."

David Cowden  
Secretary to the Faculty

January 8, 1969

To: The College Community  
From: Student Council

Student Council met again Wednesday afternoon and evening to discuss recent developments relating to black admissions. We greatly appreciated the resolution which the faculty made at its Tuesday evening meeting. We understand this resolution to include: (1) a commitment to a substantial increase in the number of black students; (2) a commitment to immediate interim steps to increase the number of black students in the Class of 1973 (including the admission of "risk" students); (3) a recognition of the need for a more viable life for black students here (including the appointment of black administrators and counselors).

However, we regard faculty endorsement of the formation of a committee consisting of members of the Admissions Policy Committee, members of SASS, consultants, and other students to be equally imperative. We urge immediate implementation of this SASS demand which calls for student participation---particularly black student participation---in the decision-making process. Student Council has considered this to be an important issue all semester. A basic cause of the present crisis is the lack of student and black participation as an integral part of the decision-making process. We recognize that there are two distinct perspectives to be considered---a white perspective and a black perspective. Both must be heard at all levels; both must be respected. A significant decision-making role for blacks in the college must be created.

We consider the joint committee to have two basic functions: 1) to establish a long-range philosophy governing black admissions policy; 2) to work out the details of implementation of faculty decisions. For example, if the faculty recommends establishing a supportive program for "risk" students, it would be the job of the joint committee to decide precisely what that supportive program would consist of.

What is needed now is a clear and sincere commitment on the part of the faculty by passage of the substantive demands. We feel that the faculty's decision to use the SASS demands as its agenda is a step in that direction. We understand that these are difficult problems to resolve in a seemingly short time, but we also sympathize with the impatience of SASS and other students.

In short, it must be recognized that this is a crisis situation and that immediate action is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, if we wish to avert crises of similar nature in the future, steps must be taken to insure student participation in the decision-making processes of Swarthmore College.

Signed,

Student Council

John Braxton  
Lauren Brubaker  
Stephanie Cooley  
Carl Kendall  
Randy Larrimore  
Hank Levy  
Gerard Mare

Mary Noland  
Carol Pixton  
Ellen Schall  
Lyle Snider  
Absent: Lyn Peery  
Roger Wood



SASS

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*Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society*

Swarthmore College

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9 January 1969

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