

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

January 3, 1969

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Swarthmore Students
From: Faculty Members of the Council

You may be interested in the accompanying memorandum concerning the demands by SASS which was recently sent to members of the faculty.

It is important to bear in mind that the SASS statement is a statement of the students' views on their education and on their studies--are really 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 helping them to see the urgency of the special problems that their 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.

James C. Brundage
Mark A. Heald
Rolan P. North
J. Richard Saxe
Frank R. Plarom
Peter F. Thompson

Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

January 3, 1969

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.

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