

Black Academic Boycott Follows Rejection of Culture Center Sites

Following a tour by members of the "Southwestern Afro-American Students' Society and the administration of possible campus facilities for a Black cultural center Wednesday morning, President Robert Cross reportedly offered SAAAS Commissioner Russ, 661 24th October Pl. Pharmacy Room or Ballroom House for its use in the fall, depending on which was available.

The offer was unsuccessful, however, for after SAAAS 11 a.m. deadline for an acceptable location had passed, it called a strike. "Black students refuse to participate with facilities as long as the College still can locate one that," an all-College meeting announced.

In a statement to the community issued yesterday afternoon, President Cross said that SAAAS felt only Ballroom House to be a suitable building for the Black cultural center. At the same time, he said, SAAAS had refused to let the administration the necessary budget and program implementation for the center. In reply to this position, the administration offered both Ballroom for the use next fall with the specific decisions on budget and program requirements to be approved by a committee of Black students and administrators.

LATEST ATTEMPT

The tour was the latest in the series of administrative attempts to solve the problem explained by Mr. Cross Tuesday night in Clatsop to almost one thousand members of the community. Drawing out of suggestions made at a Student Council meeting early Tuesday afternoon, the "Challenges for Fresh and Undergraduate Part II" was held mainly for informational purposes. President Cross, Acting Director of Admissions William Quensberry and Acting Chairman of the Black Student Committee Frank Preece spoke at the meeting.

The tour attempted to provide additional information to questions that were raised at Tuesday morning's meeting. President Cross stated that one of the reasons he decided to close a headquarters last spring was that he saw the possibility of a cultural center here that had not been "possible on Park Avenue and 5th Street," at Hunter College.

He attempted to provide the audience with a more detailed account of administrative decisions concerning the cultural center than had been provided at the meeting meeting. "I thought we would have one before this," he said, "and I was wrong."

However, Mr. Cross admitted that SAAAS members had presented a "urgent case" for the temporary use of Lodge 4 which was used this year as a cultural center. He expressed hope that Wednesday morning's tour would provide the solution, and described his offer of refurbished Lodge 4 and 4 for a temporary facility in the fall as a "half-heart gesture."

In his speech, President Cross referred to a parade. This remark was a reference to a torchlight parade held by members of SAAAS outside his house Monday night, in which they professed to read poetry, make some comments to and abuse Mr. Cross, and left.

Mr. Quensberry assured the audience that the Committee on Admissions and Scholarship Policy was reviewing the SAAAS report only to determine the feasibility of its implementation.

The only matter of some controversy between the two committees had been the issue of letting student tour guides report the reactions of prospective students to the Admissions Office without the applicants' knowledge. SAAAS felt this was an invasion of privacy.

The tour was ended, however, when the Committee proposed that a second interview be conducted with a student. Mr. Quensberry said he had been completely caught by surprise by the SAAAS statement on the SAAAS report at Tuesday morning's



ROBERT CROSS

Offering two explanations for his "strategy" to provide SAAAS with Ballroom House, Mr. Cross cited the College's meeting overcrowding and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Because of "unhappy circumstances," the College is becoming conditioned by law to meet students next fall.

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meeting.

Mr. Purson assured the audience that Duncan Cunningham, newly appointed head of the Black Studies Program, would have the same responsibilities and power as a department chairman, although he would have to work with other departmental chairmen given the inter-departmental nature of the program. The failure to find full-time black faculty members was attributed to the late date of the start of the search last spring. "We thought it would be better to find the best visiting professors possible rather than to put the program off for another year."

Expressing his openness to meeting the program into a department, Mr. Purson reiterated that it would be best to wait for Mr. Cunningham's arrival for that decision. He also outlined the reasons he considered to

make the program more relevant to the black experience. "We are willing to give them a more than sympathetic hearing."

Mr. Purson, in answering the first questions raised by SAGE in reference to the black studies program, said that the Committee wanted to wait for many policy decisions until the new director of the black studies program arrives in the fall.

In response to SAGE allegations that ninety per cent of the Committee was white, Mr. Purson said that of the 18 members there are black faculty members, eight are white faculty members, four were black students and one is a white student. That is, 66 per cent of the Committee is white. Every black faculty member has been asked to be on the Committee, he said. He stated that he was open to suggestions as to a change in membership.