

Students Assail Racism, Pragmatism Of Council Black Studies Appointment

by Alex Abellhoff, James Brown, George Beattie, Randall Cooper, and T. J. Martin

In its closed meeting of Sunday, October 8, the Student Council continued an act that was racist in intent, interest in philosophy, and disturbingly far-reaching in its implications.

The racievore and awareness of a minority of the Council establishment, we are skilled by the thought that Sunday's actions characterize the frame of mind of a majority of this semester's membership.

Study the scenario: we do not translate the term "racist" equivocally. With the composition of the Student-Faculty Black Studies Committee altered to include four faculty members and four students, and with

three of the students to be appointed by SACS, the Administration strongly indicated that the fourth to white.

William Collins is a Black Junior; he is in a better position to know the political, economic and social needs of Black people, to which the educational program should be attuned; he has had considerable homogeneous experience through service on the CEP and on Jean Proulx Committee (Chairman); and he is an articulate, analytical student of racial politics in his own right.

Lisa Brown, a white Freshman, is, by virtue of her admission to Swarthmore, in doubt of comparable success in potential. Furthermore she is enthusiastic about learning and participating in the student government; her opinion, enthusiasm, fervor, is an evidence for experience; and her interest and leadership potential cannot be cited as qualifications at this crucial point.

That Student Council appointed Lisa Brown as its representative to the Black Studies Committee is a travesty that heightens racism and shapes the College.

Originally Collins was the only candidate for the position, but through Council members' open discussion of the candidate at its meeting of Wednesday, October 5, Lisa Brown was actively recruited by an Executive Committee member. This same member verbally impugned the clarity of Collins' interest in the appointment before Collins appeared for his interview; at the close of the interview, Lisa Brown openly admitted the superior qualifications of her candidate.

This double-dealness in regard to what should or should not have been the concern of Council in shuffling upon an appointee has led us to the following conclusions: at best, some members don't know any better, and the leadership is racist in not providing moral direction; at worst, members are openly lying to themselves and others as to their motives.

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fully affecting the educational structure of Swarthmore, I see as much danger in incrementally stagnating. I hope that the next President will take a lead in making a searching and fundamental examination of the role and status of Swarthmore. My tentative conviction is that the President will have to open the institution's eyes to its role in the country; to make Swarthmore relevant both to curriculum and to campus activities.

To retain any sense of direction I sincerely believe that the President of Swarthmore must have two important administrative capacities. First, he must listen carefully and with sympathy to the various constituencies of the college. Second, he must have carry-through without undue vacillation or antagonism. The chief fault of the previous administration was the lack of leadership in making decisions and pushing them. In approaching both carry-through and sense of direction the President must be aware of, and be willing to use, all of the tools at his or her command, including: new decisions, building, administrative staff, intellectual leadership, and personal example.

One of the major problems of a

Let us examine the reasons forwarded in support of the Brown nomination.

It initially was stated that a non-SACS viewpoint was desired. Essentially, that meant a non-Black viewpoint. Since there were no Asians, Orientals, or Eastern Europeans, we're forced to assume the Council desired a white viewpoint. This is clearly a racist argument.

If the question arose regarding Collins' competence to, and accessibility to, Student Council for representing its viewpoint, a more pertinent question must be considered: how can one person effectively represent the viewpoints of so internally diverse a body as Student Council?

SACS will be flattered to know that some SC members respect the internal coherence, and, by direct implication, the plurality in the viewpoints of the Committee appointments. On the other hand, the members would be insulted by the inference that SACS people are uniformly disparate, and that SACS members are so shortsighted as to be susceptible for which SC processes to be searching.

Collins clearly stated that he was not an "organization man," that he would exercise his judgment, and that he would support SC positions only if they were valid. If Council wanted the followers of a dead-endness, then it was right in rejecting Collins. However, in all due respect to Lisa, that argument does not at all dictate that she be appointed.

It is also strongly implied that a "white" viewpoint was necessary on the Committee. Putting aside the impossibility of defining a "white" viewpoint, it should be plainly evident that even if the committee were all Black, a "white" viewpoint would necessarily be represented in the committee proceedings, because any change at this College inevitably becomes the product of a white community and a white administration.

Finally, when it was submitted that a white representative was specified by the Administration, all previous racist arguments aside, a previous Executive Committee member cited "pragmatic concern" and "political expediency" as the reasons for supporting Lisa Brown. Aside from a show of Marxist racism from the Administration and Student Council, it shows with blinding clarity the dearth of moral leadership from which Council suffers.

It is up to Student Council to refuse to play the Administration's game, for in its that is to give itself to political prostitution.

When Council chairpersons assert that Faculty members would look more upon a committee with a white than on it, we know that they would be more impressed by the appointment of a qualified Black representative by a nearly all-white Council.

This event forbids the beginning of a trend that is dangerous and immoral. Certainly it is vitally present that a member of Council would recruit a candidate for appointment in opposition to one that is already available and qualified.

In the final analysis, Lisa Brown was appointed because she is white. Our quarrel is not with her, provided that she does not continue to allow herself to be used and thereby endorse Council racism.

Our quarrel is with a Council that puts expediency and questions faculty reluctance to cooperate above dignity, honesty and intelligence.

Call for expedience (also the theme of "Don't take a stand now: the time and the issue are not right.") We assert that Council has refused to take a stand for so long that it will never recognize a time of no issue of importance; in short we assert that it is always the time when the issue is racism.

Yielding to Administrative pressure to "balance" the Committee does not give power to the Council, viable input to the Committee, or a valuable addition to the curriculum and the education of students and the College community.

This act further suggests that, through a team recently composed of "pragmatists," Student Council as a unit will approve racial policy. The working assumption of Student Council that it represents the students of Swarthmore College immediately makes the entire student body an advocate of racism.

We have taken upon ourselves the task of informing the College community of this situation — a task which is in actuality the responsibility of the Student Council within the context of representative government. The concept of confidentiality has no place in a democracy.

We hope that this act is positive, and this trend in general, will not go unnoticed and unopposed. Their approval and overt approval of racism must be differentiated.

Especially not here, Swarthmore is fast becoming a museum of racism.