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*President Smith*

Minutes of the meeting of the Special Committee on Black Studies.

Monday, September 30, 1968. Sharples Dining Hall. 12:45 - 2:00 pm.

Members present: Faculty: Asmarom Legesse  
Frank C. Pierson (Chairman)  
John Shackford (Secretary)  
Jon Van Til  
Harrison Wright

Students: Marilyn Hollifield  
Clinton Etheridge  
Don Mizell

The meeting began with discussion of the purposes of this committee. Clint Etheridge said that the main purpose of this committee should be long-range planning--how to phase in a Black Studies Program into the college's regular program. Short-range planning depends mostly on the department, the demand, and openings. Mr. Van Til said the committee has two purposes. First, it is an internal pressure group; secondly, it can make proposals that can be brought before the faculty--but these will have to be concrete, workable proposals. Mr. Wright said that the most important function of the committee is to talk together about issues and problems, and that if we can reach a consensus, that will be a significant part of the committee's work and achievement.

Should the committee try to define the areas of concentration in a Black Studies Program? We should try to define the educational theory and objectives of such a program at Swarthmore. Would these objectives be basically academic and scholarly, or geared more directly to action? Both; it would depend partly on the course--Education courses are more pre-professional than most others here. Clint Etheridge felt that there are several purposes that a Black Studies Program would serve at Swarthmore. First, it is of social importance. If Swarthmore is to produce educated people, they will need to understand contemporary society,

including the present changes and crisis in race relations throughout the world. Secondly, it is academically compelling--white students at Swarthmore have been cheated by the lack of black studies in history, literature, etc. Because Swarthmore is a small, basically white college, it will never become a black liberation school--its curriculum must therefore compromise between a complete lack and a complete dominance of Black Studies. A third educational purpose would be served in that black perspective is important not only as a relationship between black teachers and black students, but also for scholarship in general. Kenneth Clark's doll experiment showing that black children prefer white dolls and are thus white oriented is a good example. It took a black insight to think up the experiment. Similarly, the authors of Black Rage are uniquely sensitive to the problem. The same process can be seen on a personal level. In reading a report about African political leaders--which told how these leaders went to England where they gained a sense of competence which they later instilled in their people--Clint noticed the analogy to the education of black college students in this country--their similar need for isolation. But he also noticed that a white reader would probably not have seen the analogy.

To whom would a Black Studies Program at Swarthmore appeal? As Playthal Benjamin (at Haverford this fall) says, Black Studies do not have to justify themselves except as scholarship. They will attract both black and white students on that level. Don Mizell said that if the program had to be directed to a more limited body of students it should be mostly to black students. Would black students boycott a white teacher of Black Studies (as seemed to be implied at the first meeting of the committee last spring)? No; the point was more<sup>2</sup> that it would be very disappointing to have a white teacher as the first



appointment in Black Studies. Mr. Wright said that the question of the necessity of black teachers needed to be discussed more. For example, should we say in the report that we will write that we should aim for black teachers as a goal, or that black teachers are not necessary to the program? Clint Etheridge said that perspective is more important than color, though perspective almost always depends on color. Mr. Van Til said that a variety of perspectives and alternative points of view are necessary--which would mean at least one black American and one native African--but we shouldn't limit ourselves by setting quotas. Don Mizell felt that black teachers are a high priority. Mr. Wright agreed that it is important to know priorities, even if only as an ideal goal to aim for in the long range. Mr. Legesse said that alternative points of view are important to social sciences (eg. colonial vs. native African views of African history). Don agreed, saying that alternative views at Swarthmore now means getting black teachers. Mr. Wright said that since he already teaches African history, Swarthmore is stuck with a white teacher in that area; but this may be more reason for seeking a black teacher of Afro-American History. Even a black teacher of, say, chemistry, serves a purpose beyond mere tokenism--namely that black teachers can be a commonplace. Even black counselors are needed, since black students often don't feel there is anyone here they can talk to.

It was felt that we should try to write a long-range masterplan of an interdepartmental Black Studies Program, similar to International Relations. And that if we find that we cannot write one, or cannot agree, then we will have learned something.

The committee agreed that it is too early to write a report. We should wait until we have reached real conclusions--for example, on a masterplan for a Black Studies Program.

We will meet again next Tuesday, October 8, at 12:30, in one of the small dining rooms in Sharples.

Appended to the minutes, two dittoed sheets, "Curriculum Offerings in Black Studies (preliminary and incomplete)".



Curriculum Offerings in Black Studies  
(preliminary and incomplete)

Economics

Social Economics course (Marcus Alexis): sections on economic status of black workers; comparative educational, housing, and health patterns, consumption patterns in center city areas, programs for dealing with urban poverty. Dr. Alexis, a nationally known Negro economist, is Professor of Economics, School of Business Administration, University of Rochester.

Labor course (Frank Pierson): sections of course deal with employment and unemployment in urban centers, movement of labor from rural to urban areas, discrimination in hiring and promotion policies, black worker career patterns, private and public manpower development programs.

Labor and Social Economics seminar (Pierson and Pryor): several weeks on the foregoing topics.

History

African History course and seminar (Harrison Wright):

American History courses and seminars (Robert Bannister and James Field):

The general courses in American history and the American history seminar deal with selected issues in this area.

Colloquium on special area (Harrison Wright)  
(e.g., last year's colloquium on South Africa)

Political Science

Politics of Urban Ghetto course (Paul Lutzker and Alvin Echols):

According to Mr. Lutzker, "The course is conceived of as a confrontation of the general concepts and theoretical approaches of the discipline with the concerns of people involved in community organization. In what ways can confrontation with concrete problems clarify the ambiguities of the discipline's formulations of general principles? In what ways can the work of academics aid community action organizations in understanding the nature of the decision-making process they are trying to influence or alter?" Mr. Echols, an active leader in the Philadelphia Black Community, is head of the North City Congress.

Politics of Africa course (Raymond Hopkins)

Other courses and seminars, such as Political Development, Political Sociology, and Politics and Legislation, bear on this general area.

Psychology

A number of courses, including Psychology of Attitudes, Social Psychology of Social Issues, and Problems in Urban Education, bear on this general area.

### Sociology and Anthropology

Societies and Cultures of Africa course (Asmarom Legesse)

Race and Ethnic Relations in the U.S. course (Jon Van Til)

Social Change course (Robert Mitchell): in studying theories and case studies of social change, special attention is given in this course to the modernization process in Africa.

Race and Culture seminar (Jon Van Til)

The Departments of Art History, English, and Music are considering curriculum proposals in this area, and part of the Program in Studio Arts will provide work in this area if arrangements can be worked out.