

New Admissions Dean Bryant To Expand Black Enrollment

by Wanda Blair

Continuing his career in specialized ministries to black people, Fletcher J. Bryant assumed his duties two weeks ago as Assistant Dean of Admissions with a liberal

admissions philosophy and a hopeful outlook for significant increases in black enrollment.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to work and share with black students and help represent the black perspective at all levels of the College," says Mr. Bryant, a 33-year-old ordained minister of the United Methodist Church.

Mr. Bryant brings with him ten years of experience in urban social work and community organization. To him, the new position is a "logical transition" and a "continuation in a more specialized manner of the kind of work which has relevance to my life-style and future." He sees "the whole campus scene" as a "valuing sign of the future."

RECRUITMENT

Of particular interest to him is the recruitment of black students. "Of course it is to be noted, change. It is important that black students enroll in institutions like this to gain a better understanding of social America and to free black people from the bondage."

He agrees in theory with the broad approach to admissions used at Davidson. "My general consideration will be to look for students who are involved with life, well-rounded students who are academically, socially and culturally adept, not just students who are tops in their classes but who can't communicate with people," he explained.

Although he has had several offers for administrative posts at col-



FLETCHER J. BRYANT

leges in the past, Mr. Bryant feels that Davidson exhibits the most positive signs of a nation aware of the importance of increased black admissions, the development of a black cultural center, and the evolution of a black studies program. "The admissions office here is open and sensitive. The people seem to recognize that a significant black population here not only benefits black students, but the total college as well," he says.

The black cultural center, in addi-

tion to giving blacks "an important point of reference in a positively white institution," will be a strong factor in the revamping of prospective applicants.

Mr. Bryant also has hopes that the black studies program will evolve into an integral part of the curriculum. "There is an alarming ignorance of the history and contributions of black people exhibited by whites. Although Black Studies is of particular importance to black students, it also has to be made relevant to white students. Negroes must realize responses are had by interdependent, not in ignorance of blacks. White students, however, must be willing to make sacrifices to understand what blacks have gone through and why that led this way."

Mr. Bryant thinks departments "will come much more to black students when there are more black

students, black faculty and black administration. It will mean they have stronger representation at points of power and give added trust and confidence."

He feels that black enrollment should continue "to be in line with the growth of the College, but it is my aim to bring it as near as possible."

Mr. Bryant's rationale for this is based heavily on Stokely Carmichael's definition of black power. "It is important to infiltrate the system of all politics. Blacks have to accept portions of responsibility to gain the process to bring about social change," he says.

Born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Mr. Bryant says he has lived in nearly every state, "but I call Philadelphia my home." He obtained his bachelor's degree in history and education from Lincoln University and his master's degree in religious education from Boston University. While serving as a minister of education and director of the community center in Rochester, N.Y., he earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Colgate-Rochester Theological Seminary.

COMMUNITY WORK

For the past five years he served as director of the inner-city ministry for the United Methodist Church in Detroit, dealing with drug addicts, alcoholics and underprivileged people. It was while advocating local college students to find work opportunities in urban social work in Detroit that he became interested in conducting his ministry by serving at educational institutions.

Mr. Bryant intends to eventually continue his social work in the Philadelphia area. "Community action has been my life. When the smoke clears, I hope there will be opportunities to be involved with it in this area," he says, "but I have