

SASS

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Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society

Swarthmore College

Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

December 23, 1968

Mr. Courtney Smith  
College Mail

To the President of Swarthmore College:

Merry Christmas!

Enclosed are the "clarified" SASS demands you requested some time ago. If you fail to issue a clear, unequivocal public acceptance of these non-negotiable demands by noon, Tuesday, January 7, 1969, the Black students and SASS will be forced to do whatever is necessary to obtain acceptance of same.

(signed)

Clinton A. Etheridge, Jr.  
Chairman, SASS

cae/ah

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**Demands**

SASS has always insisted that black students be consulted and involved in all aspects of deliberation on matters involving black students. Not only does the Report of the Admissions Policy Committee violate this principle, it has several other faults. First of all the report included in its tables information taken from the confidential files of black students and attempted to put this information on public display. Second, the report maligned and questioned the integrity of black students and their organization, a questionable position for a document supposedly "concerned" with recruiting more black students. Finally the report approached the problem from the conservative, overly rigid viewpoint of an institution primarily concerned with the preservation of its own academic excellence. We cannot accept either the first or second edition of the report of the Admissions Policy Committee - Recruitment and Enrollment of Negro Students.

We therefore demand:

that a revised reworked and rewritten report on black admissions be produced by a committee consisting of members of the Admissions Policy Committee, members of SASS, and outside consultants including consultants recommended by SASS.

We further demand:

- that in the interim the College take positive steps to increase the enrollment of black students in order to achieve the critical mass necessary to sustain a viable healthy black student population. Specifically these steps should include:
- a. the acceptance and enrollment of a significant number of so-called "risk" black students for the academic year beginning September 1969. Significant defined here to fall between ten (10) and twenty (20).
  - b. negotiations with institutions presently conducting summer enrichment or reinforcement programs for entering freshmen so that "risk" students accepted by Swarthmore for the academic year 1969-70 may attend such a program.
  - c. negotiations with several quality private secondary schools so as to arrange that "risk" students accepted by Swarthmore for the academic year beginning in September 1969 may have the option of attending such a school for one year prior to entering Swarthmore with the students total expenses for that year paid for by the College.
  - d. the designing and implementation in academic year 1969-70 of a post enrollment 'support' program that would be available to black students after enrollment and that would take special consideration of "risk" students mentioned above. Such a package shall be designed by the Admissions Policy



Committee in consultation with SASS.

- e. the review and revision of present admissions standards and practices involved in evaluating black applicants by a group consisting of Admissions Committee members and SASS members. This group shall determine standards and practices to be applied to black students seeking enrollment in September 1969.
- f. the recruitment and encouragement of more black transfer and junior college students (particular attention might be paid to Community College in Philadelphia) waiving the rule on one year's attendance for financial aid.

SASS considers detailed policy on black admissions to be the appropriate task of the Admissions Committee - SASS special committee. Nevertheless, if the College is to make a firm commitment to having black students on this campus there are several things it should agree to now.

Therefore we demand:

- a. that the College agree to increase the total number of black students enrolled to one hundred (100) within the next three (3) years and to one hundred fifty (150) within the next six (6) years.
- b. that the College intensify its recruitment of black students in the West and South and search more actively for Puerto Rican students.
- c. that the College take steps to seek out and appoint an Assistant Dean of Admissions, subject to consultation with SASS, who shall be black and who shall be directed to concentrate his efforts on recruitment, enrollment and post-enrollment support of black students and other minority group students. This dean shall be installed no later than November 31, 1969.
- d. that the College take immediate steps to recruit and appoint subject to review by SASS a black counselor available to all black students for the purpose of providing confidential advice and guidance. It is to be understood that this counselor shall not be responsible to the Deans for providing them with any confidential, privileged information.

In comparison with other similar institutions Swarthmore has a significant lack of innovation and effort in terms of tapping of new sources of funds, utilization of existing funds, or implementing new programs in the areas of recruitment, admissions criteria, post-enrollment and enrichment. The only major innovation initiated by the Dean of Admissions in the last four years is the Post Baccalaureate Program, a relatively low-risk venture. Two outside observers, professionals in the area of black admissions have characterized Swarthmore's policies as overly-rigid, conservative, and too preoccupied with protecting its own academic standards. To quote:

"Our general conclusion is the the college is allowing its

own view of its academic excellence to rule out over ninety percent of potential black candidates. As long as they insist upon relying on traditional measuring tools to determine black potential they will fail in the attempt to get more students."

These are the mildest words that could be used to describe the present situation.

The present Dean of Admissions is not able to deal with a black viewpoint as presented by members of SASS; and in fact he is not able to deal with the very thought of black people defining themselves and issues for themselves.

Despite the efforts of SASS to make its viewpoint known, there have been those who have fought to maintain their ignorance on this matter, among them the current Dean who insists on clinging to his "integrationist ethic." However, not only has he insisted on his point of view he has gone to great effort to undermine SASS's. He has questioned its integrity and legitimacy portraying it as a small cult of ideologues who represent only a portion of the blacks on campus. He has even overlooked the common-sensical legitimacy and value of black student participation in a committee reviewing black admissions policy. His is the most dangerous kind of paternalistic racism, that kind which would deny blacks the legitimacy of their self definition, the legitimacy of their right to self definition, while at the same time seeking to impose its own viewpoint and the viewpoints of the few negroes who agree with it. At a time when black people all over the world are proclaiming their rights and abilities to define themselves and to have a voice in all decisions which affect them, blacks at Swarthmore will settle for nothing less than the same. Any administrator who denies this will find himself in the deepest of chasms.

The present Dean of Admissions has not only made statements from time to time which were aimed at undermining the integrity of SASS and black students of this campus, he has made these statements at strategic times and attempted through them to aggrandize his own power and undermine the influence of SASS whom he sees as an opponent. In other words he has acted as a self-interested power broker vis-a-vis an assumed enemy. For a supposedly neutral administrator to put himself in such a position is unjustified, undesirable, and dangerous. Not only has this Dean placed himself in such a position with regard to SASS, but in his now-buried letter to Student Council he questioned the integrity of that body implying that they acted in haste and without reason in endorsing the SASS statements. This was also aimed at isolating black students from white student supporters.



The preceding although it is directed at one individual, is not a personal attack in the pejorative sense of the word. We have merely related some of the actions and statements made by the Dean of Admissions and their consequences. It is only incidental that one person is involved. What is important are the concrete actions and consequences. We have simply called a spade a spade. The actions of the Admissions Policy Committee have not been touched on because their actions remain anonymous and in the back ground and it is our opinion that the Dean of Admissions is the leading actor in this play.

In sum then we have called to question the present approach of the Dean of Admissions toward black recruitment and enrollment. We have questioned the ability of the Dean of Admissions to deal with black students from a position of respect with regard to their self definition and their right to self definition. Finally we have called to question the fact that the Dean of Admissions is engaged in callous use of power vis-a-vis a student group.

In light of the above unless present admissions policies change or unless the actions of the current Dean of Admissions change, then

We demand:

That the present Dean of Admissions, Frederick A. Hargadon, be replaced in that position no later than September 1, 1969.

The time has come. The demands of the Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society, issued in October, endorsed by Student Council in November, have lain on the table for two months. During this period there has been no word of positive response from your administration. SASS now undertakes to reiterate, in more detail, those demands. We expect swift and positive action on the part of this college in accepting these demands.