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## President Joel P. Smith wishes to respond point-by-point to the Black Student Union requests

Joel P. Smith

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File:  
Black  
Students

November 3, 1969

Executive Committee, Black Student Union  
c/o Mr. Henry Durand

I want to try to respond point-by-point to the requests you presented to the Executive Committee of the Faculty at our meeting on October 28. Because there are so many questions involved, and because I may not understand each question thoroughly, I would like to meet with you again, as soon as you wish, to discuss these issues as well as any other points you may want to raise.

1.) You first ask that a statement be issued about racial incidents, and I have issued the statement which is Attachment A. I regret that I did not issue the statement sooner.

2.) Your second request is that there be "punitive action" against all participants in the incident which resulted in water being thrown on several Black women students. Only one individual has been identified, and his case is before Men's Judicial Council. If other individuals were involved, their identity is not known at this time, either to the Administration or the Judicial Council.

3.) You also asked for a review of the security force, and here I think the most constructive thing to do is to ask you for help. Will several Black students meet with Mr. Hicks and Mr. Shumway to present the problems as you see them and to discuss ways in which we may improve? In the attached letter (Attachment B) I have asked Mr. Hicks and Mr. Shumway to participate in such a meeting.

4.) Moving on to your requests under the heading "Academic," I have three responses:

A.) On the recruitment of Black professors, we must recognize that hiring of faculty is substantially a matter of departmental initiative. But before the academic year began, I asked Dean Lichtenstein to do all he can to encourage departments to seek Black colleagues, and he has eagerly and enthusiastically accepted that responsibility. If any Black students



want to discuss hiring procedures or to nominate possible faculty members, I would appreciate it if they would contact the Dean. (Also, I want you to know that the Dean will promptly contact the faculty member you mentioned about the adequacy of his office arrangements.)

B.) On the questions of Afro-American Studies and a review meeting with some departmental chairmen, I have asked Dean Lichtenstein to arrange the meeting just as soon as possible; and I have also asked Dr. Chessman to participate in the meeting. I would, therefore, like to ask you to refine your proposals in anticipation of that meeting.

C.) The proposal of Black History as an alternative to Western Civilization would require faculty action, and I have therefore referred the proposal to the History Department. (Attachment C.)

5. Under the heading of Admissions, there are three categories of issues:

A.) The first has to do with applications from Black students -- the procedures and criteria by which those applications will be considered. The objective, as I see it, is to establish criteria and policies which will predict the capacity of Black students to succeed at Denison more fairly and accurately than exclusively relying upon the more conventional criteria. I have asked the Admissions Committee promptly to develop recommendations on those policies and procedures. (Attachment D)

B.) The second has to do with recruiting; and I agree that our current arrangements are inequitable. Consequently, I have written to Herb Booker to invite him to discuss new arrangements with me, (Attachment E). As for a full-time recruiter, including compensation for recruiters, I do not have a firm response at this time. I want to discuss other possibilities with Herb first. Finally, you used the phrase "Black controlled" admissions program, and while I am not sure what you mean, I want frankly to say that I distinguish between participation and control, and I am strongly in favor of participation and strongly opposed to control. But perhaps it is better to save this point until I more clearly understand what you mean.

C.) I do not think it would be honest for me to pledge that we will have at least 100 Black students at the beginning of the 1970-71 academic year. Perhaps we will, but the number of Black students enrolled at that time will be a function of many things, including, among others, the number and quality of the applications we are able to attract as well as our capacity to provide financial aid. While it might be argued that such a quota is necessary



to make our commitment to diversification more credible, I believe that the opposite is more likely to be true; i. e. quotas of that kind are rhetorical and often unrealistic. We should be judged on the quality of our effort, not the quality of our promises.

7. On the subjects under the heading "Finance," I have asked Dr. Bayley to set up a meeting with the Financial Aids Committee, of which he is Chairman, and I would like to attend that meeting, too. (Attachment F)

As for the reduction of aid for seniors, if that policy should be reviewed, I believe it should be reviewed for all students; and I have asked Dr. Bayley to put the subject before the committee immediately. (Attachment F)

8. Under the heading "Administration," there are, in addition to the statement on racism two points:

A.) I will work with Deans Nivens and Rice in developing definitions of their responsibilities.

B.) On the assumption that Dean Rice will leave at the end of this year -- an assumption I very reluctantly make -- we will move immediately to search for a successor, and students will be involved in that search.

9.) Finally, with respect to the lounge, a bulletin board can be ordered immediately, and I would appreciate it if you would let Mr. Hicks know what size you need. I have asked Mr. Hicks to prepare an estimate of what it would cost to provide plumbing which would permit a water fountain and toilets. When I have the estimate, I will discuss it with you.

Respectfully,

Joel P. Smith

cc: Dean Chessman  
Mr. Dunfield  
Dean Lichtenstein  
Dean Hartshorn  
Dean Nivens  
Dean Rice  
Dean Smith

cc: Members of the Executive Committee  
Mr. Barclay  
Mr. Jalbert  
Mr. Galloway  
Mr. Osborne  
Miss Shepard  
Mr. Steele



Attachment A  
November 3, 1969

I have been asked by the Black Student Union to make a statement on racism, and I am eager to do so.

It must be said, emphatically and without reservation, that acts of racism are absolutely unacceptable at Denison University. However, it is not enough to deplore the possibility that such acts might occur. It is also necessary to insist that acts of racism shall not occur and to pledge that if they do they will be dealt with promptly and severely.

But in addition to that pledge I want to ask each member of the Denison community to reflect again and again upon what diversification of this College means -- to think about the obligations and opportunities we share, whether we are black or white, and to promise an unreserved effort toward understanding and sensitivity and, most of all, respect for one another.

Joel P. Smith  
President

November 3, 1969

Mr. J. Leslie Hicks  
Director of Business & Finance  
Denison University

Dear Les:

The Executive Committee of the Black Student Union has asked for a "review of security" at Denison. Because I am not sure what that would involve, but because I am eager to identify the problems as the Black students see them, I have asked them to nominate several Black students to meet with you and Art Shumway to present the problems and to discuss ways we can improve.

I shall be grateful, as always, for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joel P. Smith

cc: Executive Committee, Black Student Union  
Mr. Shumway



November 3, 1969

To: Morton B. Stratton, Chairman  
Department of History

From: Joel P. Smith

Dear Mort:

At a meeting last week with the Executive Committee, the Black student leaders requested that Black History be an alternative to the Western Civilization requirement.

Without attempting to judge the merit of their proposal, I believe that it deserves prompt and thoughtful consideration. I think that such consideration should properly be initiated in the Department of History, which would then submit any recommendation to the Curriculum Committee.

I would appreciate it if you would bring this student request to the attention of the history staff at your next meeting.

With thanks.

Sincerely,

J. P. S.

cc: Executive Committee, Black Student Union.



November 3, 1969

To: Dr. Robert Roberts, Chairman Pro-tem  
Admissions Committee

Dear Bob:

The Executive Committee of the Black Student Union has raised several questions regarding the procedures and policies by which applications from Black students should be reviewed, and I would like to ask the Admissions Committee to consider the questions as promptly as possible.

The first set of questions has to do with the procedures by which such applications are considered -- more specifically they have asked that the two student members of the Admissions Committee and Deans Nivens and Rice vote on such applications. It is my understanding that last year the Admissions Committee established a sub-committee to review and vote on applications from Black students, and without taking a position on the requests the Black Student Union has submitted, I would like to ask the Committee, in establishing such a sub-committee this year, to consider those requests.

The second set of questions has to do with the criteria which are used in evaluating applications from Black students. If we do not rely exclusively upon the conventional criteria, what criteria should be used? I think it would be a good idea to develop a statement of those criteria prior to the review of any applications this year, and I would suggest such a statement should be reviewed by the faculty.

With thanks.

Sincerely,

Joel P. Smith

cc: Executive Committee, Black Student Union  
Mr. Dunfield



November 3, 1969

Mr. Herbert Booker  
Box 492 - Slayter Hall  
Denison University

Dear Herb:

I am eager to discuss modifications of our arrangements for recruiting Black students, and I would appreciate it if you would make an appointment to discuss some possibilities with me as soon as possible.

With thanks.

Sincerely,

Joel P. Smith

P. S. Will you please invite Tom and Wrise to join us if you agree that would be appropriate.

cc: Mr. Dunfield

November 3, 1969

Dr. Francis C. Bayley, Chairman  
Financial Aids Committee  
Denison University

Dear Frank:

The Black students have asked for a meeting with the Financial Aids Committee, and I, therefore, would like to ask you to schedule a meeting for that purpose, and I would appreciate an opportunity to attend.

Also, a question has been raised about the policy which results in a reduction of aid during the senior year, and I would appreciate it if the Committee would review the policy and submit a report to me as promptly as possible. I am interested in a review of the policy as it applies to all students, not just Black students.

With thanks.

Sincerely,

Joel P. Smith

cc: Executive Committee, Black Student Union