

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY RESPONSES TO THE
BLACK STUDENT PETITION RECEIVED
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 1968

Racism of any character has no place at Northwestern which as an institution where tolerance and mutual respect are essential to the educational processes and for the dissemination of knowledge. The University repeats that in the admission of students, the appointment of faculty and staff, and in the operation of all its facilities such as housing, dining halls, libraries, placement offices and the like, no discrimination on the basis of race, religion or color can be countenanced. The University deplores incidents which have racial implications and asserts its determination to prevent any such events to use its authority to employ disciplinary measures against those who violate the rights of others.

Increasing efforts will be made to improve the social and cultural welfare of all students in ways which will better prepare them for the roles of professional leadership which are in keeping with the educational objectives of a university.

To this end and pending receipt of reports from existing University Committees now considering these problems, a special University Committee on Human Relations will be established to consider the grievances wherein the human rights and dignity of students have been violated, to continually review all facets of the university life and recommend new policies and procedures which will bring our student environment in line with Northwestern's national and international responsibility. While the membership of this Committee has not yet been determined, appointments will be made after consultation with all elements of the university community.

The University Discipline Committee (UDC) has recently completed an intensive study of the racial problem of black students on campus,

and their aspirations and search for identity within the university and the community. This report has just been released for publication. The Committee on Human Relations will be asked to develop programs and recommendations which will implement the objectives of the UDC report.

While the crises which confront the nation and the university warrant the depth of this concern, it is essential that all members of the university act responsibly and with accountability in helping achieve the objectives of equal rights and dignity for all.

II. ADMISSION

Since the summer of 1965, the University has made a substantial effort to change the composition of the undergraduate student body. The change has been from a homogeneous student body to a student body which is representative of the many different subcultures of our society. The forces necessary to bring about this change were (1) increased recruitment efforts in a variety of high schools serving populations which traditionally had not been interested in the University in the past and, (2) a substantial increase in the University's financial aid program. One result of this effort was the matriculation of 54 black students in the entering class of 1966, in contrast to 5 black students in the entering class of 1965. At least 35 of these students were from innercity high schools. In the fall of 1966, recruitment efforts were intensified in predominantly black areas. The results were more applications from these areas, more admitted students from these areas, but a nominal matriculation increase over the previous year. For example, 50 students from innercity Chicago schools were accepted for the fall of 1967, but only 31 matriculated. In 1966, 36 students were accepted from these same high schools and 35 students entered. Greater competition from other colleges and universities has affected the percentage of students who have entered the University. In the fall of 1967, the admission recruitment

efforts were further intensified to include the innercity schools of Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Gary, Indiana. In addition, the University has coordinated its efforts with the Cooperative Program for Educational Opportunity, the National Scholarship Service Fund for Negro Students and the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

These efforts resulted in more applications than in the year 1967 and the acceptance of approximately 100 black students to the entering class of 1968. The matriculated number will not be available until the end of summer. (According to a recent article in Newsweek, Northwestern has accepted more black students to the entering class of 1968 than any other major private university.) The University will continue to increase its efforts in the innercity school systems and will continue to admit to the University those students who have a high probability of success at Northwestern. In terms of actual percentages, at least 50 percent of those admitted black candidates for admission have attended high schools serving the innercity. There is no reason to believe that this percentage should change with the University's intense interest and efforts in this area. The University will welcome the support of its black students in University admission activities.

In the spring of 1967, the University held a series of meetings with interested black students to discuss campus, summer program, and admission problems. The Admission Office now seeks to formalize such meetings in order to acquire better counsel from the University's black community regarding the recruitment of black students. (It is requested that a committee be appointed by the black student community to assist the University admission activities. One of the most immediate needs is to develop procedures to assure that a greater percentage of those black students accepted enter the University. Students selected to serve on such a committee should be undergraduate students. This is consistent with the University position in asking undergraduate students to participate more fully in the decisions governing those elements affecting student life.

The University further will provide the black community of Northwestern with the names of all black students who are known to the administration. In addition, the University will provide a list of names of all entering black students to the black community when all names of all entering students become available to campus organizations.)

III. SCHOLARSHIPS

The financial aid budget of the University has been expanded for the last three years. This expansion has permitted Northwestern to offer more financial aid to a substantially greater number of its admitted candidates. However, the increased offers of financial aid would not have been possible without the packaging -- jobs, loans and grants -- of all financial aid resources.) Acceptance of job and loan offers are optional. The packaging of financial aid is an agreed procedure by more than 600 universities which are members of the College Scholarship Service. The purpose is to assist as many students as possible who have demonstrated a financial need. (If a maximum utilization of resources had not taken place, the number of financial aid students assisted in the past two entering classes at Northwestern would have been reduced by one-third.)

Each application for financial aid is carefully evaluated relevant to the family background of the applicant. Special consideration is given to students from unusually limited economic circumstances. The University's Committee on Financial Aid to Students realizes that some students will not concur with the decision governing their applications. In such instances, the University's Office of Financial Aid requests the opportunity to fully explain the relevant decision. Students receiving financial aid are made fully aware of their financial responsibilities before entering the University. This information is available in the University literature sent to the admitted candidate. The offer and acceptance of financial aid is a binding contract

between the University and the student.

In the past, the University has established a temporary loan program in the Office of Financial Aid to assist black students. In addition, payment deadlines have frequently been waived and a mutually agreeable payment date has been determined. In several situations, awards have been increased after individual conferences with students. Realizing the pressures encountered by financial aid students, the University in 1966 eliminated the grade requirement for the retention of financial aid. Prior to that time students were required to maintain a minimum grade average of 2.5 if financial aid were to be continued.

To help alleviate any remaining financial burden of the student, a summer job placement program was established in 1967. The Office of Financial Aid assists students in securing summer employment. Earnings are as much as \$300 to \$1,000 for the summer through the Work-Study Program of the federal government. Summer jobs of this nature are available working with youth in innercity Chicago. (Because of the increasing needs for educated young men and women to work with innercity youth, the University encourages members of the black student community to seek such summer employment.)

The Office of Financial Aid also is willing to assist any student in acquiring additional University or federally guaranteed loans. A private university is unable to completely finance the education of any of its students. However, better than eighty percent of the black student community is receiving outright grant assistance in excess of two thousand dollars a year.

The Office of Financial Aid will attempt to assist those students who need to attend one summer school session in order to graduate with their class. This opportunity will be made available to such

students between their junior and senior year. Students who are unable to graduate even with one summer school session will not be provided this opportunity. However, they will be considered for a fifth year of financial aid in order that they may graduate. This statement, of course, is predicated on the assumption that the student is progressing normally toward a degree. A student whose grade average consistently falls below a "C" is not progressing normally toward a degree. In addition, students will receive consideration for financial aid for summer school if a special course or program necessitates such consideration.

In summary, the University will not be able to categorically increase the scholarships of all black students. However, the Office of Financial Aid is willing to evaluate each student's request independently and discuss the decision with that student. This position is consistent with the guidelines established by the Committee on Financial Aid to Students which governs financial aid applicable to all of its undergraduate students.

IV. HOUSING

"The housing policy of Northwestern University is not predicated upon any consideration of race, color, or creed of the applicant. All roommate assignments will be considered binding for all parties throughout the first academic quarter." The foregoing is a direct quotation from the Housing Information statement which is sent to all new students. The University Housing Committee added the second sentence at its meeting in January of this year. Freshmen roommate assignments will not be changed during fall quarter. Thereafter, changes will be made by the Housing Office when possible and only upon the consent of all parties.

In addition, all landlords wishing to list a rental property with the University have been asked to sign a statement which specifies that they "agree to offer without regard for race, color, or creed the facility listed." In addition, they are sent a copy of the Housing Policy Statement.

While we can understand and appreciate the frustrations that lead to the demand for black living units, the University cannot accept to this request. For one thing, the University is living with a severe shortage of on-campus housing which in itself limits the policy options which are open to us. Given the need to house freshmen on campus, there are not enough spaces left over to permit the University to give any one group of students exemption from the normal room assignments procedures.

The most important reason, however, for denying this request lies in the function the residence hall serves in the educational program of the University. The residence hall is for more than just shelter and a place to escape from the daily academic routine. Rather it is a place where students learn from each other and thereby further the educational process in which this institution is engaged. This function of University housing depends on a mixture of student types which cannot be achieved if certain groups are segregated from the rest of the living environment.

While the University believes there is much that must be done to accord the black student the rights and respect on this campus that he deserves, it strongly believes that organizing separate living for black students is self-defeating and cannot contribute constructively to the academic purposes for which the University exists.

The University will take every step it can to provide housing for black students wishing to live on campus. Black students wanting to live off-campus are urged to use University off-campus housing services directly and to report to those services all cases of suspected discriminatory renting practices so investigation and follow-up action can be taken by the committee on housing discrimination.

V. CURRICULUM

Perhaps the most appropriate way in which a university can contribute to the increase in understanding which is needed between the black and white segments of our society is through its academic program. The faculty has the sole authority and responsibility for matters of curriculum with regard to course content as well as new courses. Any request for new credit bearing courses should be directed to the Curriculum Committees and Department Chairmen. Consideration should also be given to the development of special non-credit programs within such activities as the Evening Divisions, the Experimental College and Symposium.

While the recommendations for the appointment of new faculty emanate from the faculty, your assistance in identifying prospective faculty members would be useful. The University welcomes the addition of more qualified black faculty members to its ranks.

VI. COUNSELING

To improve relations between students and between students and the administration, the University is committed to increasing the counseling facilities available to all students. The University is pleased to announce that Mr. Calvin Smith accepted a joint appointment in the Office of Admission and in the Office of the Dean of Students on April 15, 1968 to be effective September 1, 1968. Mr. Smith is a graduate of Carver High School in Chicago, received his Bachelor of Science degree from Winston-Salem College in North Carolina, his Master's degree from DePaul University, and presently is a doctoral candidate at Northwestern. Mr. Smith also has been a high school teacher and administrator. The University encourages those students who are interested in meeting Mr. Smith to contact Mr. Ihlanfeldt so that a convenient time might be arranged.

VII. FACILITIES

The University realizes the special needs for activity space for black students. By September 1968 we will provide a room on campus in an attempt to meet some of these needs. The space should provide for general lounge activity and also be usable for meeting activity as well. It is clear that all of the space needs of black students cannot be met through the provision of such a room and every effort will be made to schedule other multiple-use space to assist in meeting these special needs.

We ask that a committee of black students be selected by you to work with us in our efforts to meet these needs.

Some cultural activities and many social activities presently available on campus are irrelevant for the black students. New activities must be developed to meet these needs. In addition to space, financial support is also needed and while it is not possible at this time to specify what support will be available, every effort will be made to provide reasonable assistance.

VIII. OPEN OCCUPANCY

The University has taken a strong stand on open occupancy in Evanston, as evidenced by Mr. Kerr's recent statement to the Evanston City Council. In the housing under its ownership -- that is -- the N.U. Apartments, Dryden Hall, and faculty homes -- there is no segregation whatsoever. A list of occupants in this housing is available. Furthermore, when the Committee appointed to deal with discrimination in housing makes its report within the next two weeks, the University will be prepared to implement the measures recommended. The University is committed to working for just living space and conditions for all black people.