



1968

BLACK STUDENT

DEMANDS

FULL TEXT

Black Student Union

Committee on Racism

April 8, 1968

SUBJECT: Grievances and Demands of Black Students on the University
of Oregon
TO: President Arthur Flemming

The sudden emergence of overt white racism, along with the intensification of covert white racism, on the University of Oregon campus, has threatened the very foundation of this institution. In the past, Black students have dealt with racism on an individual level whenever it presented itself. However, recent incidents have indicated that this method is no longer valid as a strategy. Therefore, to combat racism and to reduce the racial tensions on campus, institutional changes are necessary.

We, the Black students at the University of Oregon, will not tolerate the degrading, insulting, humiliating, and the dehumanizing consequences of racism. If racism, and especially institutionalized racism, cannot be eradicated by institutional changes, if the University community is not willing to implement changes, it then becomes the responsibility of the Black students, who are the victims of this racial oppression, to purge this campus of racism, by whatever means are necessary.

We submit the following list of grievances to this institution, to give the University of Oregon an opportunity to deal with the problem of racism, which it hasn't effectively done in the past.

It is our sincere hope, and desire, that they will be acted upon immediately.

Submitted by the Black Student Union

Johnny Holloway

Johnny Holloway, President

1. Dormitories and related areas

- A) The degrading and white supremacist attitudes of dormitory counselors.
- B) The arbitrary right, (or pseudo right), of dormitory counselors to confiscate private property.
- C) The isolation of Black students in certain dormitories.
- D) The lack of food relating to the culture of Black students in the dormitories dining halls.

2. Finances and related areas

- A) The subjective nature of evaluating applications of Black students for loans and financial assistance.
- B) The lack of information given to Black students pertaining to job opportunities.
- C) The insulting and racist attitudes of administrative personnel in Johnson and Emerald Halls, toward Black students.

3. Athletics

- A) The inappropriate academic counseling given Black athletes by their coaches.
- B) The attitude of looking upon Black athletes as "Black Gladiators," and nothing more, by their coaches.
- C) The deficiency in the scholarships given Black athletes, which does not insure the completion of their education after their athletic eligibility has expired.

4. Curriculum

- A) The gross lack of Afro-American history, and other subjects relating to the Black culture, as part of the standard academic curriculum.
- B) The ~~absence~~ ^{absence} of Swahili and/or other African languages in the Languages Department.
- C) The ~~absence~~ ^{absence} of African studies in the undergraduate and graduate programs in the university.
- D) The lack of Black professors and Black graduate students in the University.

General

- A) The absence of Black art and culture on campus.
- B) The lack of a representative student government
- C) The misrepresentation of justice that is exercised by the student court system.
- D) The degrading and humiliating attitudes of student personnel and classified employees in the Erb Memorial Student Union.

To reduce the racial tension on campus, and to eradicate these inhumane acts and attitudes of racism at the University of Oregon, we, the Black students, submit the following demands, which must be acted upon immediately.

DEMANDS:1. Dormitories and related areas

- A) More Black dormitory counselors.
- B) At least three (3) Black students assigned to a dorm. This should be set up as an option such that it should be the discretion of Black students whether or not they would like to live with students who share their same common cultural heritage.
- C) Since foods relating to other nationalities and/or ethnic groups are served in the dormitories dining halls, i.e., German, Spanish, Italian, etc., it is imperative that "soul food," which relates to Afro-Americans, should also be served.
- D) All white dormitory counselors be required to have training in human behavior and interpersonal relationships. This would eliminate some of the antagonism between white and Black students within the dorms.

2. Finances and related areas

- A) Due to the inadequate and inferior education that Black students are subjected to within their communities, it is apparent that they cannot compete successfully for a preponderant quantity of the financial assistance available. It is, therefore, imperative that the factor of "need" should be the most relevant criterion for the evaluation of an application for aid.
- B) A list of all job opportunities or openings should be submitted to

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the Black Student Union, whenever jobs are available. Along with this list, there should be information indicating the duties, the pay, and the requirements for the various positions.

- C) The inconsiderate and degrading acts by employees and employers on campus are deplorable. Unless they can learn to interact with other people, treating them as human beings instead of objects to be manipulated, the relationship between employer-employee, and employee-customer, will continue to deteriorate. Therefore, we demand that all student and civilian employees, as well as employers, have some training and instruction in human behavior and interpersonal relations.

3. Athletics

- A) The increase of Black athletes and Black recruits on the University of Oregon campus, necessitates the hiring of Black coaches, to facilitate communication between Black athletes and the athletic department. To avoid the situation that developed at the University of Washington, and at the University of California at Berkeley, the recruitment and hiring of Black coaches is a demand of great urgency.
- B) That coaches cease and desist the implicit and/or explicit advising of Black athletes to not attend the Black Student Union meetings, and/or not to associate with members of the Black Student Union. Acts of this nature can only engender more friction on campus. Black students will not tolerate the behavior of anyone who tries to sever a Black student from his cultural heritage.
- C) That coaches must stop advising Black athletes to take courses that are irrelevant to their education. The racist attitudes that coaches hold, that Black students are inherently inferior intellectually, or that they have a low capacity for learning cannot be allowed to determine the academic pursuits of Black athletes.
- D) That scholarships for Black athletes should be extended to cover their educational career. Presently, Black athletes have one or two terms before graduation, after their athletic eligibility has expired. The purpose of attending a university is to obtain an education. Participation in sport is secondary. Therefore, we demand that scholarships for Black athletes should cover their complete education, regardless of their athletic eligibility.
- E) That coaches cease and desist interfering in Black athletes' personal affairs, that is, how they should dress, where they can go, with whom they can associate, and who they can date. It is neither the right, nor the responsibility of coaches to tell Black athletes how to handle their personal affairs. The only area in which the coaches have any jurisdiction over athletes, is that which pertains directly to the performance of their particular sport.

- F) That the unwritten and implicit quota policy of Black athletes on the track team be abolished. It has been the experience of Black athletes on the track team in the past, that such a policy does exist. Therefore, we demand that it should be abolished in order that the athletic department can recruit the best Black athletes to represent the University in track and field.

4. Curriculum

- A) We strongly demand that Afro-American history, and Black culture be instituted in the regular academic curriculum, and that subjects relating to Black culture and heritage be taught in all areas of the academic curriculum. This university cannot continue to be the perpetrator of inherent racism by denying to Black students their history, literature, and culture in their educational process. In conjunction with this, we also see the necessity for all students at the University of Oregon to be exposed to Afro-American history, literature and culture. One of the crucial problems confronting this nation is the ignorance of White Americans of Afro-American culture. A university which has the primary purpose of training teachers, social workers, social scientists, etc., to deal with the problems of society, yet excludes the historical and literary heritage of all the people, is not performing a legitimate function in the face of today's realities. Therefore, it is of great urgency that not only Afro-Americans learn about their culture and heritage, but that white Americans do so also. This will dispel the erroneous myths about Afro-Americans which presently motivates the behavior of White America. Furthermore, this demand must be met if the University wishes to take the position that the two races must establish communication and intergration in order to deal with white racism both on the University of Oregon campus, and in the nation as a whole.
- B) That Swahili and/or other African languages should be taught in the regular curriculum of the language department. Africa is no longer the "dark continent," and since the University is supposedly the place to prepare future leaders, it is imperative that white students, as well as Black students, be able to communicate with the people of African nations in the future.
- C) For the same reason as state in (B) above and for others, we demand that programs in African Studies, and Afro-American Studies, be established on the undergraduate and graduate levels. In order to train teachers in Afro-American and African Studies, it is of vital importance that programs be developed that will lead to a Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral degree in these areas.
- D) That graduate programs recruit Black students in all academic departments.
- E) That all faculty members and teaching assistants should have some

training in human behavior and interpersonal relations. The racist attitudes of faculty members and teaching assistants in regard to the intelligence of Black students and their capacity and potential for learning, will no longer be tolerated by Black students.

- F) That Black professors must be hired. If white students are not exposed to Black professors, they will continue to maintain that Black people cannot achieve such academic status. Furthermore, Black students need professors with whom they can relate and identify with in cultural relevancy.

General

- A) That Black art and culture be part of the Art and Culture programs on campus.
- B) We demand that the student government be reorganized so that it will be representative of the entire student body. The domination of student government by the fraternities and sororities is unhealthy for the university, especially since they are a minority on campus. If students have no way of voicing their views and opinions through the normal channels of student government, they will express them through other, and perhaps, illegal means.
- C) Since student government is not responsive nor responsible to Black students, we demand that the Black Student Union be notified of all national and international student conferences so that Black students can be represented.
- D) That office space and adequate facilities be provided to the Black Student Union in order to conduct a study skill and tutoring center. Presently, Black students and other minority students, (Mexican, and Indian Americans), have no facilities into which they can channel their grievances. In addition, this center will function as a clearing house for grievances of students in the Upward Bound and H.E.P. programs, with direct communication to President Fleming's office. Furthermore, the Black Student Union must be provided with funds to cover operational expenses if the center is to carry out its function.
- E) That a staff member of the Oregon Daily Emerald be available to receive and publish information relating to Black students.
- F) Starting with Fall term 1968, and doubling in 1969, we demand that seventy-five Black students be enrolled as unqualified admissions, with full financial assistance. Students will be recruited by the Black Student Union.

There should be a Black counselor per five students.

Finally, a \$30,000 budget should be allocated to the Black Student Union to provide Black cultural activities to the University community.

Black Student Union
Johnny Holloway, President

cc:

National Headquarters of the Congress of Racial Equality

National Headquarters of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Black Student Union:

University of Washington

University of California at Berkeley

University of California at Los Angeles

San Francisco State

Portland State University

Reed College

Western Washington University

President Arthur S. Flemming

Chancellor Roy E. Liguallen

Governor Tom McCall