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Commission for Blacks

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Abstract of Notes Taken at Task Force on Blacks Interview with
Mr. Philip A. Scheurer, Director of Student Activities on
June 20, 1973
Recorded by N. E. Dittrich

This organization makes deliberate attempts to make contact with black student leaders.

During 1973-74, Eric Plunkett (a black) will be Vice Chairman of the Student Activities Board. He was also on that Board in 1972-73. Furthermore, there was a black woman on that Board the year before that.

The University Board of Trustees specifically prohibited in 1971 the expenditure of student funds for any special interest group such as black students or a black student union.

Ralph Boston does not report to Scheurer; he is under the Counselling Center.

Four all-black concerts this year were substantial failures. None of the four were apparently supported by black students. The losses on each of these ran between \$2,000 and \$4,000.

In spite of what Scheurer believes to be extended efforts to accommodate black interests, he acknowledges significant communications problems with black students in general.

During the current year there were two professional vacancies in his staff. A four-man screening committee was established with the specific provision that no white males would be considered and that a woman or a black must be chosen. Of the three eventually interviewed, one was a black but was not hired because there was a unanimous feeling that the black was substantially less qualified than the other two.

A general feeling was expressed that Ralph Boston's handling of his duties substantially compounded the communication problem between the Student Activities Office and black students. This feeling was described as a general lack of feeling for detail, thoroughness, and follow-through. The feeling was expressed that Boston was not given specific charges or a job description and that he had not formulated one for himself.

Scheurer feels that the establishment of the black fraternity had resulted in a polarization of black and white students which tended to maintain their separation of activities.

Student entertainment programs of even a moderate caliber requires about 3,000 in attendance in order to be economically feasible. Even if all 700 black students supported a particular program, this would still be drastically short of the required attendance.

Scheurer said that black students and organizations had been urged and even coerced to nominate blacks for various organizational committees with little or no results or response in the formulation of committees. He said that

blacks were specifically appointed to the Board with usually one of three members on the Board being black.

Scheurer feels that a wide array of specific efforts had been made to bring a meaningful increase to the aspect of black presence to the campus. He feels that all of these efforts are documentable. In spite of this, he acknowledged disillusionment at the insignificant results generated and awareness perceived. He acknowledged that in view of the little results from his extended efforts, he might be justified in telling everyone to go to. His considered feeling at this time is one of frustration at his inability to create an awareness on the part of black students regarding the very extensive efforts that had been made on their behalf.

He specifically requested from the Task Force an evaluation of his efforts, a critique of his procedures, and any recommendations that might lead to a higher degree of success in this area.