



1973

1973 N.E. Dittrich Issues List

Commission for Blacks

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Recommended Citation

Commission for Blacks, "1973 N.E. Dittrich Issues List" (1973). *Task Force Issues*.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_blacktaskissues/10

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE 37916
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING

February 8, 1973

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Mr. Hardy Liston, Jr.
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: N. E. Dittrich
Professor and Acting Head, Department of Accounting

SUBJECT: Suggestions for areas of accomplishment for Task Force on Blacks

I will preface these suggestions with the observation that, while I believe a quasi-militant approach to our problems may have been (or, to some degree, may still be) necessary, it will not be sufficient itself for ultimate solutions. I personally believe that long-run solutions to our problems will require a "graduation from militancy." Consistent with these thoughts, I have attempted to formulate the following suggestions which should complement existing efforts and possibly help foster a second phase of progress relying heavily on cooperation by both Blacks and Whites who have attained a common, long-run perspective.

Following are specific suggestions:

(1) Campus Visitations of Successful Black U.T. Graduates

It would seem cohesive and fulfilling for current black students to see and have the opportunity to confer with "successful" black U.T. graduates who, to some degree, embody what is probably the essence of the aspirations of many black students. Witnessing actual "results" should promote a constructive belief of attainability. I personally know of two recent black U.T. graduates (one a modest and one a better-than-average student) whose progress in the public accounting profession should be meaningful evidence to current black undergraduates that reasonable degrees of personal effort and self-direction can lead now to personal, professional, and financial fulfillment. I feel that most CPA firms involved would be willing to underwrite a reasonable number of such visitations.

(2) Counter-Problem Perspective

It should be realized that each significant problem with which our group will deal probably has a significant counter problem. If these counter problems can be anticipated, analyzed, and understood by the minority group, it should contribute toward a long-run perspective that would be more conducive to the ultimate solution of our problems. Simply stated, this perspective tends to lead to the realization that we, rather than I have a problem.

(3) Extension of Horizons

Although it is probably true of all problems with which we will deal, certainly the most severe and significant problems require a planning horizon, a tolerance threshold, and an accomplishment goal that is consistent with long-run solutions. This is not to be mistaken for a "some day" approach to problem solutions but rather a genuine effort to optimize the expectation level of all groups, the anticipated degree of change, and the desired outcomes in a manner consistent with long-run solutions.

(4) Critical Role Orientation

It is probably safe to say that there have never been greater opportunities to change those attitudes contributing to minority problems. It must be widely realized that most actions of the present minority groups on campus will, to some degree, either destroy or confirm the prejudiced views of those whose beliefs must be changed before an acceptable long-run solution to the race problem is accomplished. The present group of minority students must understand that, if they are at all successful, they will be the vanguard of much larger groups to follow.

Among whatever obligations exist to their parents, their colleagues, or those who follow, most impelling is the obligation to fully exploit every personal resource, to strive for maximum achievement, and to represent their group in a manner that inspires cooperation, respect, and goodwill. Regardless of innate capacities, the group should expect from each individual dedication, self-discipline, and a concern for attainment that is consistent with the suffering that has been endured and the promise for all that will come with success.

Ideally, there should be preliminary briefings leading to such an awareness, a counseling program to refine this awareness, and where necessary possibly even a group self-policing function where the actions of any small group tend to subvert the accomplishments of the larger group in any aggravated way.

I suspect that most of what I have attempted to describe above are possibly subtle ideas or concepts and hope that these descriptions are sufficient to convey the essence of each to others. Possibly after additional reflection and assistance from others, a more precise description can be formulated.