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Memo to Task Force Re Ralph Boston with Minority Affairs Discussing Issues

Commission for Blacks

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July 6, 1973

Memo to Task Force

Re: Conf. w/Ralph Boston, Minority Affairs

Present: Barb. Reid, J. Phillips, R. Boston

Ralph feels the Cultural Affairs Board as presently constituted does not adeq. represent interests of black students, or at least this has been the situat. in the past. (Ralph's office is in charge both of black student counselling, and black programming initiat. The C.A.B. furnishes the money for all campus cultural events.) Part of the problem is the need to get specific requests in early (before spring) - there is no contingency funding. He cited two opportunities that could not be taken advantage of (a black play troupe visiting K. C., and Leroy Jones) because of the funding set-up. This past year the C.A.B. had a total budget of \$65-75,000, \$4,000 of which went to the Minority Affairs Office (\$2000 for Black Arts Week, \$2000 for guest artists).

He also expressed concern about the Campus Entertainment Board choosing black entertainers who are not the preference of black students. Choice of entertainment, he thinks, is a significant issue with blacks, and there needs to be more black input into the process.

Much of his counseling work concerns students who are having academic difficulties. There is a noticeable deficiency particularly in reading comprehension skills among many entering blacks. Many students suggest that there should be preferential grading policies to meet this problem. But while such a policy would focus on the need for corrective measures, he said, it might be self-defeating in terms of the realities that students will face in business and life after they graduate.

Alternatively, some remedial education program is needed. The Reading Center has not been successful in this regard, because of embarrassment, lack of central location, and fear of the unknown (many students don't realize that a black woman administers the program). He suggested a need for some sort of paid

"floating tutor" who could seek out the students having problems e.g. by socializing with them at the Rafters. Volunteer tutorials, he thinks, are not very successful. He senses that the black attrition rate is much higher proportion than that of whites. He thinks more emphasis should be placed on maintaining fairly rigid ACT minimums for admission, since he believes this test within limits is a fairly good indicator.

Over a three-quarter period, Ralph estimates that he counsels some 350 students (some of these are repeaters). He estimates that last fall there were 1000 blacks on campus. Not all students he sees have problems. Some come in "just for a talk." He believes his central location is very helpful in this respect.

Black students are concerned about inability to get a second black sorority and a second fraternity on campus. The reasons given to date for this inability are not persuasive. Re sorority, no Pan-hellenic bldg. space, but public service organizations such as the sorority concerned are housed elsewhere. Re frat., doubt whether enough blacks on campus to support a 2d organizat. Also, there is concern whether 1st frat. is actively particip. in IFC activities. Phil Scheurer has ult. say-so on new greek organs. Phil seems opposed because he thinks black frat. organizations are separatist. But the fact remains that almost no blacks join white greek org., and there is a need for black compet. on campus.

A Black Cult. Center would be an asset if operated properly i.e. with educat. programs etc. for blacks and whites alike. But if it became a "blacks-only" hang-out, or a place just for dating, it would be undesirable.

Black students don't frequent Mr. Nash's counseling center very much. A black presence is needed (and being sought).

With regard to hiring more black faculty, Ralph says he has reason to believe -- based on the info given him by a secret. in one dept. -- that some search statistics have been fabricated. He cannot reveal the name of the secretary, because of the possible risk to her job. (It seems that some method of checking the accuracy of these data may be needed.)

Inter-racial dating was severely frowned on by blacks several years ago, when Ralph first came here, but now it is at least tolerated. There are more black girls than boys on campus. Black males resent black females dating at KC. Such

inter-racial dating as there is, is almost exclus. black male - white female.

Most of the black rooming in the black-concentrat. dorms is single-race. For off-campus housing, he thinks it would be helpful if the Univ. maintained a housing list for black students, or at least a realtor's list for incoming black faculty.

Ralph will furnish us with a copy of the Darrell Crutcher report dealing with a dress-code incident in polit. science. It is Ralph's understand. that the Chancellor's Office directed the dept. involved that instructors have no right to dictate dress codes and that they may not do so in the future.

. Jerry Phillips