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1973

1973 Report Regarding Commuters

Commission for Blacks

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SPECIAL SERVICES

—THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE—812 Volunteer Boulevard—Knoxville 37916

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 27, 1973

TO: Dr. Richard Nash

FROM: Ralph H. Boston

RE: Task Force On Blacks

Here are the answers that were available for the questions listed on Pages 2, 4 and 5. Hope they are helpful.

B. Off Campus

I am not sure that a definite pattern can be identified, but there are certainly discriminatory practices in existence. There have been attempts to organize and seek the support of the University in eliminating discrimination, but as of yet they have been unsuccessful. Campuses in neighboring states have given the impression that they provide some services in these areas, but the extent of the service is not really known. To the question of why the University doesn't, I have no answer.

A large number of our Black student population are local commuters, so it would be difficult to identify a percentage. However, most of those who do live off campus tend to live in predominantly Black apartment complexes; i.e. Green Hills, College Hills, and Prince Hall Village. They are able to secure housing at a cheaper price than in other areas.

Blacks who live on campus feel that 1) they need to be near the campus facilities that are available for their use; 2) transportation is most definitely a problem; 3) the city is not as receptive to strangers as the campus.

Off campus mixed roommates are rare but do occur.

Most of the commuters are from the Knoxville area with a scattering of students commuting from as far as 45 miles. I would estimate that at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the enrolled students commute.

In talking with off campus locals as compared to off campus out-of-towners, the locals feel that the campus is here for academic work only and, with the exception of the Library, rarely use the facilities open to them. Out-of-towners are much closer to campus as most were, at some point, on campus residents.

Ralph Boston, Coordinator of Minority Affairs and Special Services
Martha E. Begalla, Coordinator of Women's Programs
Brenda Miller, Ass't. Coordinator of Women's Programs and Special Services
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Community Affairs

- A) With respect to involvement and interest, Knoxville College provides a social atmosphere not found on the UT Campus. All major Black Greek organizations are in operation at KC and many UT students pledge into these. (UT has only one each of major fraternities and sororities.) The KC Campus also brings entertainment that relates directly to Blacks thus drawing from UT's Black populace. Black religious institutions have always welcomed Blacks in the same fashion as white institutions, i. e. free bus service, etc. There is no record as to the availability of white religious institutions for Blacks, but history dictates that, except for campus services, Blacks rarely attend predominantly white churches. There is some evidence of problems encountered when interracial couples attempt to dine or seek entertainment at certain white establishments, but there is a white audience at most Black entertainment centers or restaurants. I strongly feel that steps should be taken to help the Black student adjust to his new environment by making the environment relate to the student, i. e. things to which he is accustomed, music, food, clothing, etc.
- B) UT is now extending its hand in the public service area and the reaction from the Black community is positive, but cautious.
- C) Beyond the public service area, almost non-existent.
- D) Generally not very good, but somewhat mixed. An institution built by whites for whites with very slow and deliberate changes.
- E) Mixed! But definitely more aware of problems that Blacks face in society than their KC counterparts.

Human Relations

- A) Almost daily, I talk with students who speak of classroom problems, housing problems, harrassment problems with Safety and Security, insensitivity to Black needs by the Administration, and almost complete frustration with the campus as a whole. One of the prime concerns is the insensitivity of the University to provide a first class social atmosphere for Blacks. There is also a concern relative to the University's acceptance of white fraternities and sororities and only one of each organization relating directly to Blacks.
- B) The only facility especially for Blacks in the Student Center is the AASLF Office. The campus has one other facility especially for Blacks and that is the fraternity house of Omega Psi Phi. There are other campuses in Tennessee and in neighboring states that have Black cultural centers that range in function from community involvement centers to centers that display Black Culture. Most of these functions are open to whites, but I have no record as to the amount of white student involvement.

- C) It is very difficult to assess the total relationship with white students. On the surface things appear quite normal, quiet and peaceful, but when you listen to conversations of Blacks there seems to be a different attitude. This also applies to Instructor/Administrator.
- D) Blacks feel that the campus Police Department is very racist in its attitudes toward them.
- E) Nominal, almost non-existent and not enough to make any significant changes.
- F) Mixed. Some seem to attempt to understand and lend assistance, others don't.
- G) Cannot answer.
- H) Little or no contact except for Special Service and Admissions, and Financial Aid. They speak very highly of Dick Waters.
- I) Surface, but I've not observed any depth in the conversation. Rarely speak of changes or needs; only sports and the like.
- J. Beyond the normal contacts of worship, very little community contact.

Information and Perspectives

- A) The Human Relations Council is a group that handles discrimination cases. Cases of discrimination do not, however, have to reach the Human Relations Council. They can be handled by the particular department, or by the ombudsman. No information.
- B) Attempts have been made through Special Services and the Counseling Center to bring the two factions together, but attendance lessened after the first few sessions.
- C) The Blacks I've talked with think summer orientation is a waste of money. The one plus from the session is the fact that one can register.