

Wheel Forum

The issue of providing a means for matriculating more black students at Emory has generated much discussion on campus. Lack of scholarship funds are lowering Emory's admission standards are but two aspects of the argument. Here Mr. Marvin Arrington, a black administrator of Emory and Atlanta City Alderman and Dr. R.C. Johnson of the Chemistry Department present their views in open letters to the faculty.

Marvin Arrington

"Black Students Deserve Help"

Since arriving on the Emory campus, one issue has continued to arise, whether Emory needs to relax its academic standards and recruit more Black students. I have given this subject matter much consideration and in one instance sought to do something about the problem. I submitted a proposal to the Academic and Admissions committee that would allow for the admission of 20 additional black students. This document will come before you at the scheduled faculty meeting on February 9, 1970, and I certainly would hope that you will give it your utmost consideration.

There are those who disagree with my commitment to enroll and finance the education of the 20 additional black students talked of in the proposal. One department, the Chemistry Department, seemingly has entered into a conspiracy and of recent taken my statements out of context to prevent the enrollment of additional black students. Because of said adverse actions I want to state my views on why Emory should admit and enroll more black students.

Laurence M. Gould, President Emeritus, Carleton College, stated "I do not believe the greatest threat to our future is from bombs or guided missiles. I don't think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care—when the spiritual forces that make us wish to be right and noble die in the hearts of men." All along I have stated that because blacks have been discriminated against, because of the inferior education they have received, and because of a second-class citizenship practiced in this country, the black high school student cannot be expected to compete with his white counterpart where testing is concerned. To give you an example of this I would like to cite you a case in point. I never had nor studied from a

new text book while enrolled in primary or secondary school in the Atlanta area. All the books I studied from came from white high school and in almost every instance, pages were missing or lines had been drawn through most of the words. In addition, I was bussed to a black school and while enroute I passed two white high schools. As though these burdens were not enough, I had to work to make ends meet. Mind you, I was being schooled under the separate but equal doctrine which has proven to this day to be an evil being. It was created to keep blacks in inferior schools.

While I do not want to divulge my experiences I wanted to point out what blacks endure in our free and open society-democracy.

Yes, Doctor Mandell and other opponents, blacks don't score well on competitive examinations because of the circumstances mentioned above and because the competitive examinations presently given are geared toward white standards, and black mores are not included. Thus, it stands to reason, people are more responsive to issues that are relevant to the environment they live in. What I am trying to say is that blacks have not been able to achieve because of racism, hatred, white supremacy, ignorance, lack of concern, blindness, stupidity, non-responsive educational training, and do-nothing attitudes. These factors have hampered blacks historically and still prevail on most southern campuses.

The rights of blacks are pinched off, pinch by pinch. When are we going to do what is right? That is, open educational opportunities to all, regardless of race, creed, or national origin. Certainly, I don't have to plead the case of the black man. For my statements are not allegations, but established truisms. I rest my case with you on a quotation from William E. B. Dubois:

"The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

This then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius. These powers of body and of mind have in the past been strangely wasted, dispersed, or forgotten. The shadow of a mighty Negro past flits through the tale of Ethiopia the Shadowy and Egypt the Sphinx. Throughout history, the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness. Here in America, in the few days since Emancipation, the black man's turning hither and thither in hesitant and doubtful striving has often made his very strength to lose effectiveness, to seem like absence of power, like weakness. And yet it is not weakness -- it is the contradiction of double aims. The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan--on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde, could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause.

Away back in the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment: few men ever worshiped Freedom with half such unquestioning faith as did the American Negro for two centuries. To him, so far as he thought and dreamed, slavery was indeed the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice. Emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of wearied Israelites. In song and exhortations swelled one refrain--Liberty; in his tears and curses the God he implored had Freedom in his right hand. At last it came--suddenly, fearfully, like a dream. With one wild carnival of blood and passion came the message in his own plaintive cadences:

"Shout, O children!

Shout, you're free!

For God has bought your liberty!"

God speed your decision.

Marvin S. Arrington
Black Administrator

Dr. R.C. Johnson

Emory Must Maintain Its Academic Standards

The Admissions and Scholarships Committee has presented to the college faculty a "Proposal for a Special Program for the Recruitment and Admission of Additional Black Students to Emory College." In this proposal the committee reflects its conclusions that increased enrollment of black students will require further lowering of admissions standards with special programs and major financial support for those enrolled. An attempt to change the nature of the Emory student body so that it more nearly reflects the racial balance in the Southeast should interest all Emory faculty; and if a realistic and effective proposal is presented, it would be supported by the vast majority. On the basis of information available to the Admissions and Scholarships Committee but which has not been presented can be raised. As a member of this committee I will use this handout to present this information to you.

Data on the academic performance of all the black students who have attended Emory was available. Of the 54 students who were enrolled prior to fall 1969 11 withdrew or were asked to leave. This percentage is gratifying since few of these students would have been admitted if admissions standards had not been lowered in their favor. Nineteen of those who graduated or are now enrolled at Emory have grade point averages less than 2.3 and 28 have grade points less than 2.5. This indicates that over two-thirds of the black students have had academic difficulty. It would seem inevitable that student [[students]] enrolled under lower admissions standards would have greater difficulty. Marginal performance certainly produces undesirable effects in individuals or groups. Therefore the question should be raised not only to whether it is in Emory's interest to seek to enroll students who have such a limited chance of success, but whether it is in the best interests of the students themselves.

Another interesting fact reported to the committee is that the black students now in the college each receive on the average \$2500 per year in financial support. (Some receive appreciably more; a few pay their own way.) This fact poses two questions. Does the marked difference in the wealth of the white and black students permit an acceptable social

relationship among all Emory students? Does Emory have present or potential assets to provide support for an increased number of black students at \$2500 each?

In regard to the first question it is interesting that 75% of Emory College students receive no financial aid from Emory. On an average the remaining 25% receive remission of less than half of their yearly tuition.

In order to consider whether Emory can afford more black students one can try to estimate the cost of the proposed program. If twenty students were found for the program and fifteen were enrolled for the academic year, the support for the first year would be $15 \times \$2500$ or \$37,000. The summer staff would cost \$5000, for a total of \$42,500 if all other incidental costs are neglected.

It must also be remembered that this is in addition to the \$20,000 per year (which also escalates to say \$70,000) which President Atwood has already committed to keep black enrollment at its present level. These are large figures which in four years would amount to \$600 per college faculty member or to \$75 per year per college student. Even if this entire program were implemented it would probably support less than 100 students a year, a number too small to have much effect on the campus. I believe Emory would have a hard time surviving as a private institution carrying the burden of their support and yet it would remain open to cries of tokenism and discrimination.

Rather than stop with these negative reactions, let me suggest an alternative for possible future actions.

Emory and other private schools have always enrolled most of their students from the wealthier and better educated segments of the community. This is not an entirely desirable situation, but has been an economic necessity. The natural source of black students would seem to be the same part of their community. Such students would I suspect be better able to adjust to the Emory environment. I suspect that if a reasonable-sized group of such students could be enrolled, they might feel at home here, like Emory, and encourage their friends to attend. I believe this sort of feeling is necessary but does not exist here now, nor is it likely to exist if programs of the type proposed are implemented.

We do recruit in the upper-middle class negro community now, but with limited success. Competition for these students is very intense and the admissions staff feels that greater success is unlikely. Mr. Arrington is more optimistic. I beleive if a fraction of the funds required for the proposed programs were put into suitable recruiting programs, progress could be made. Moreover I believe that a flow of students

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