

March 21, 1969

Mrs. Pauline Byrd Johnson
2326 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Dear Mrs. Johnson:

I am writing to you as an alumna of the College to enlist your cooperation. As you without doubt realize, the College has in the last few years been making a concerted effort to increase the number of Black students on campus. We have moved steadily ahead for four years and now expect to have approximately 55 Black students on campus next year. However, we are not satisfied with this number and are seeking to find every means we can to increase our enrollment in this group. I therefore am writing to you in the hope that you may be able to make recommendations to us from time to time.

You will without doubt recognize that our recruitment of Black students is not as easy as at many institutions. In class standing and testing scores, our students at Kalamazoo rank at the very top of the colleges in Michigan. This means, then, that our number of potential students is not as great as could be found in many university environments. Our Admissions Committee does accept the fact that the Black student must be admitted on the basis of different criteria. It is seeking to give every benefit of the doubt. However, it still cannot enroll students who are not ready for our competition.

In the last year or so we have made considerable progress in our racial situation. Our Black organization has been quite active and is seeking to build here a more constructive program for their people. This year we have two Black professors and that number should be doubled or even more next year. In June 1968 our Board of Trustees officially approved a Center for Urban Studies and Services through which we are building a new curriculum which will include a major emphasis in this area. We have a special Chair, too, which has been given to us for Urban Studies. Of course you are fully aware that our interest in Black people is not new, for almost a decade ago we brought in our first professor in African Studies and we have continue to be the representative of the Great Lakes Colleges Association in the area of sub-Sahara Africa.

I mention all of these facts merely to acquaint you with the latest at Kalamazoo. We are determined to try to help right some of the wrongs of the years. I think it likely that at times are not completely fair, but I would still contend that the environment here is far more congenial for the typical Black student than that which is found at the overwhelming number of our colleges and universities. Accordingly, we want more students from the group and we will do all we can to help them secure a college education.

If you have any recommendations to make for us now or in the future, please let us hear from you.

Sincerely,

Weimer K. Hicks
President

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P. S.

Incidentally, we of course try to meet the financial needs of all students to this particular item should not be the most important one in the enrollment of any student.