

Summary of '68 Confrontation Spring '68
DETAILS ON THE BLACK STUDENT DEMANDS

In subsequent paragraphs and in supporting papers you will find the full story of the demands of the Black Students, an experience which occupied our concentrated efforts for two weeks. Part of the reports repeat the data forwarded to local Trustees after the difficulties reached the news media. This account describes the happenings in chronological order from their beginning on May 6 until their settlement on May 17.

On Monday afternoon, May 6, the Black Student Organization (BSO) tried to leave their demands on my desk. Since I was in New York, they turned over the documents to Dean Long (Exhibit C). On Tuesday, May 7, the Administrative Committee met and deliberated. When I returned Wednesday morning, May 8, we took the requests to the Coordinating Committee (15 members from administration, faculty, and student body) which discussed them at length. For the remainder of the day I met constantly with different administrators and faculty who were involved in the suggestions. At 3 p.m. on Wednesday Dean Barrett and Dean Long and the President met with the leaders of the Black Students to make certain that we understood the demands which they had given to us. Wednesday evening the basic pattern of my reply was drafted. It was re-read and improved by several administrators and faculty on Thursday morning. The Coordinating Committee was then re-convened to consider the final document (Exhibit D). Minor changes were made and the document was then presented to the leaders of BSO by six administrators and faculty members.

On Saturday morning the BSO placed on my desk their reply (Exhibit E) in which they accepted our answer to Demands 2 and 3 and rejected Demands 1 and 4. That noon which was Mother's Day with 400 parents on the campus, they picketed the dining hall, the Light Fine Arts Building during the musical presentation, and the President's Home during the tea for parents. In their protests they were most respectful and they conformed to the patterns of propriety. They acted completely within the rules and regulations of the College though naturally we are disappointed that they took this particular stance.

On Monday, May 13, we called another meeting of the Coordinating Committee. Meanwhile, a day earlier the white leaders of Action Now, which is the local organization striving to effect change for the negro in our city, talked with the Black group in the hope of bringing about a compromise. The Action Now leaders visited with me on Monday morning, and soon realized that the administration was in no way opposed to the demands; rather, we simply could not violate the rules of the College to accommodate one student group. Actually, even in our initial answers we did "bend" further than we wished, primarily because of the sorrow through Dr. King's death. The Action Now leaders talked with the Black Students for three days, only to learn that fears and anxieties had weakened their rapport with the group. Their efforts did, however, help and led directly to the settlement.

Late in the day of May 13 we sent a second response to the Black group. This was likewise found unacceptable. They were willing now at least to discuss a settlement with us. Subsequent discussion led to the drafting of the final answer given under date of May 16 (Exhibit F). *Exh. E 1*

The College has varied its procedures at the following points. (1) The funds are not being channelled through the Student Senate nor do they come from the Senate budget. (2) We refused to give them their funds outright or to permit them to send money to any political action group such as SNCC, but we do not audit every individual expenditure. (3) We require that they, like everyone else, file a requisition form and checks are made out directly to the creditor not to the BSO. (4) We enlarged certain committees to accommodate non-white representation. (5) We dropped our insistence on control by the admissions department of their ghetto recruitment project, a decision preferred after we saw the aggressiveness of the group. We simply did not wish for them to "sell" our College as such.

In all of this we have been most, most patient and understanding. Not a voice was raised. We believe that only a bare majority of the BSO are voting in favor of their stance and we are certain the Black leaders are being fed by national and off-campus leaders. In their anxieties, they have simply become distrustful of all whites, their past friends as well as those who have ignored them. They are deeply concerned about the future of their race and their culture. Integration as such is dead, at least temporarily. This is now a trigger word which can no longer be used on our campus.

All of this now means a change in the modus operandi of our colleges. For years we have brought Negroes to the campus and saturated them with a white culture. Basically, we have tried to make them over. We have actually befriended them without making them our equals. Kalamazoo College has truly been a microcosm of the sociological phenomenon. Now we find that they are being pressured from the outside to turn away from the patterns of the past.

What then does this mean? First, we should understand that the Black Students have given us their first demands, not their last. We must recognize that we must add to our faculty a representative number of Black professors. We must alter our curriculum to include Black history and culture, for the benefit of our white youth as well as our Black. And in the near future our Black youth must come to see that the tragedies of this spring and the indifferences to their people over the years do not justify continuing preferential treatment. They still must ultimately be treated in the same manner as any other group of students at the College.

Added two Black Trustees
in fall '68