

To: Admissions Committee Members

Date: 3-14-69

From: Weimer K. Hicks

At the meeting of our Admissions Committee held Tuesday, the majority of that Committee seemed to be in favor of adding a Black student to the Committee. However, some of the Committee, mostly administrators, spoke rather strongly in support of a consistent policy. Following the meeting those who seemed hesitant did come to me with a strong endorsement of the idea of referring the question entirely to the Student Commission. I therefore visited with two senior members of the Committee and then discussed the demand with the Committee on Committees, of which the Admissions chairman is a member. The Committee on Committees, with the strong support of the President, is therefore reversing the advice of the Admissions Committee and is recommending that the Student Commission make the decision. Actually, this means that the adding of a Black student to the Committee will go through unless the Student Commission is opposed. Incidentally, I reasoned that in our discussion on Tuesday the majority were actually in favor of the idea, but the decision was effected primarily by the few, most of whom have altered their position.

One additional word. The appearance of a sizable block of students outside the Conference Room during the meeting of the Admissions Committee obviously indicates that there were communications between some Committee members and some Black students prior to our meeting. I have said on many occasions that the presence of student members on faculty committees will break down if the deliberations which take place in closed session are not kept in confidence. In every serious dialogue with decision-making groups, positions must at times be taken which should not be aired to the public. In such dialogue the Committee should be seeking to hear all viewpoints, all ideas, and then from these ultimately reach a decision. If its judgements must be colored through the failure to respect the confidence of a Committee, then ultimately our system will break down.

Actually, I felt that our Committee meeting the other day was at the highest level. Everything which was said could have been repeated to any group. None-the-less, our discussion, like all Committee discussions of a serious nature, should be classified information and not discussed with white or Black.