

May 24, 1969

Mr. Thomas Seavers, Co-chairman  
Mr. Gerald Weaver, Co-chairman  
The Black Student Organization  
Kalamazoo College

Dear Mr. Seavers and Mr. Weaver:

The following is the reply of the Faculty and Administration to your demands:

### I. The Academic Program

The Faculty is fully aware that the oppression of minorities has been a characteristic of American history and that our colleges have often reflected the prejudice and racism of the culture. The College has always been committed against any conscious racism, and it is determined to do everything possible to eliminate unintentional racism, individual or institutional, through continual reexamination of curriculum, teaching techniques, and the relationships of students with faculty and administration.

Recognizing that the Black experience has been inadequately presented at Kalamazoo, the Faculty is determined that courses pertinent to that experience will be added to the curriculum. They will be added upon the recommendation of the responsible department to the Educational Policies Committee and approval of the Faculty. We believe that these courses must serve all students. In spite of the divisions which threaten the Nation and the College, we believe Blacks and Whites face these problems in common. Each group very much needs exposure to the culture and values of the other, and each needs to examine its own assumptions from the perspective offered by the other.

Although we do not believe that race alone qualifies or disqualifies a man to teach a subject, we are well aware that many of the courses most needed in the curriculum can best be taught by Blacks, and we urgently support the search for Black teachers. The dossiers of all nominees for appointment will be considered. But just because each of us must teach from his own point of view, we believe each should present alternative positions as objectively as possible. We seek a variety of points of view among men who can listen to the positions of others and leave their students a choice.

Because we are already dedicated to adding Black courses to the curriculum and Black teachers to the Faculty, the President last summer obtained a grant for support of a Black urban sociologist, and from the date that grant was made, the College has been engaged in an intensive search. Offers have been made but refused, though the salary is well above the College average. The search goes on, and courses pertinent to minorities and the inner city will be available as soon as he is appointed.

A search is also underway for a Black historian. Like the sociologist, he will be appointed as soon as he is found, for the academic year 1969-70, if he is available, and with his appointment a course in Afro-American History will be offered. All departments, in the hunt for personnel, are seriously committed to the search for qualified Black candidates.

All departments welcome the concern of students about course revisions, new courses, and teaching approaches and look forward to more and more discussion of these matters, convinced that such discussion can make for a curriculum which is, across the board, more relevant to the needs of Black students. This applies to courses already offered relevant to the problems and cultures of minorities, such as the course in Race Relations offered by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Seminar in Colonialism offered by the Department of Political Science and the courses offered by the Department of Education. It applies to courses now being planned, like the course in Black Writers to be given by the English Department, the Freshman Seminar on Black Literature already listed by the same department, the course in Folk Music to be offered by the Music Department, the Seminar on Afro-American History under discussion in the History Department. And it applies to the courses in English, History, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, Music, Art, and all other departments now engaged in revision of present offerings, to incorporate more material reflecting the concerns of Black students.

## II. Admissions Policies and Procedures

The admissions procedure of Kalamazoo College has already been altered to facilitate the enrollment of more Black students. We now seek to enlarge the admissions staff to accelerate the registration of Black students.

(a) A Black admissions counselor will be employed as soon as possible. We have interviewed one Black candidate who is evaluated highly by the screening committee. In the event he is not appointed, a part-time Black admissions counselor will be retained. The latter appointment will be in addition to Mr. Hank Harper, the new coach, who has been hired to work as an admissions counselor during the coming summer.

As in the past, the counsel and advice of the BSO will be sought in the selection of this staff member.

(b) The Admissions Office will place a member of the BSO on its staff during the career-service quarter of the spring of 1970.

(c) The Faculty has approved the appointment of a Black Sub-Committee of the Admissions Committee which will screen all identifiable Black applicants with the full Admissions Committee having final authority in the decisions of the Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee will consist of four Black students, the Black admissions counselor, and one Black Faculty member who is already on the Admissions Committee.

In regard to eligibility, student membership on the Sub-Committee will conform to the present By-laws.

It is further recommended that two of the four Black students serve on the full Committee. The Black admissions counselor will serve in an advisory capacity to the Admissions Committee.

(d) As of the President's memo of April 29, 1969, the College had received partial or full applications from 55 Black students. A total of 31 had been considered by the Admissions Committee. The following action had been taken by the Committee: 21 had been admitted, 1 held for further information, 7 had been rejected, and 2 (women) had been placed on the waiting list. In addition,

there were 7 ready to be considered by the Admissions Committee at its next meeting and 17 who did not have completed applications.

### III. Budgetary Appropriation for the BSO

The Student Commission has a responsibility for determining how available funds are to be distributed among student organizations. Annually it receives budget requests from those organizations. The Commission has informed us that it will grant your budget request. Therefore, the College administration will hold \$5,500 in the Student Commission budget earmarked as the BSO account to be drawn upon by the BSO during the 1969-70 fiscal year.

### IV. Use of Westab Property

Under the legal contract with the donor, the College is obligated to keep the Westab building under its control for at least five years (unless it is sold for the gift value of \$609,000). Therefore it is not possible to let the Black United Front, or any other group, decide on who shall be allowed to move into the available space at Westab.

Since the operational costs are estimated at approximately \$60,000 a year, the Board of Trustees voted to use the major portion of the building for industrial warehouse space to cover these costs and, if possible, a modest return. Since the unit is strategically located for Black activities, the College has sought to interest Black organizations in the building. At the request of Mr. James H. Cossingham, Jr., Director of the Teen Center, the College has agreed to let the Center have 10,000 square feet at an annual cost of \$1,000, which is \$2,000 below the estimated cost of maintaining it. In addition, the College is working with Mr. Joseph Gamell, Director of the Lincoln Skills Center, to see if funds can be found to put the vocational education program on a more permanent footing in the Westab plant.

The College has no interest in controlling or designing the specific program of any organization, though it is glad to help in the securing of foundation and individual money to assist the organization. In fact, the administration and the Board of Trustees are seeking ways and means of financing the above programs, but it wishes no control over them.

### V. Housing

On February 10, 1969, Mr. William G. Long, Dean of Student Affairs, communicated with the BSO on the matter of housing Black students. In his letter he stated that:

1. We will house upperclass Black students (sophomores and above), who individually request that we do so, with Black roommates. We will house in the same area those upperclass students who request to live in close proximity to each other. The movement of any student or group of students is conditioned upon a determination that the rights and privileges of all other students will not be infringed upon by such movement. Although past experience has not revealed great difficulty in effecting room transfer requests, we will not evict any student in order to accommodate to these requests.

2. We will house Black freshman students who individually request that we do so with Black roommates. We will house in the same area those freshman students who request to live in close proximity to each other. The movement of any student or group of students is conditioned upon a determination that the rights and privileges of all other students will not be infringed upon by such movement. Although past experience has not revealed great difficulty in effecting room transfer requests, we will not evict any student in order to accommodate to these requests.

3. We will house freshmen with upperclassmen if upperclass space is unoccupied by eligible upperclassmen, and when an individual so requests. Similarly, we will house upperclassmen with freshmen if freshman space is unoccupied by eligible freshmen, and when an individual so requests. In either case requests will be honored on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

4. Though we are legally prohibited from including questions directed at ethnic preference on our housing questionnaire, we will include the following: "Do you have any specific housing request which is not covered by the above entries?" (This is a recommended addition; and we will welcome your suggestions for further discussion.)

5. We will make every possible effort to meet any particularly unique individual problems which may develop.

The preceding policy applies to White students as well as Black students. Efforts to meet individual requests will be made with the opening of the 1969 Fall Quarter. If vacancies do exist, we will honor the policy we have outlined above.

The position of the College in this matter remains the same as stated on February 10. The College is opposed to the deliberate racial segregation of its students in all of its programs--curricular and extracurricular. Our College attorney has informed us that any further modification of our housing policy would place us in legal jeopardy in terms of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Violation of that law could, among other things, eliminate all forms of Federal support--scholarships, academic grants, and campus development.

## VI. Rules

All students enrolled at Kalamazoo College will live under the same set of rules, regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin. We are prepared to alter the Campus Life Committee as follows: We will add one Black student appointed by the BSO, one Black Faculty member appointed by the Committee on Committees of the Faculty and one Black administrator (when available) appointed by the President of the College. Furthermore the Campus Life Committee will henceforth receive recommendations for changes in the social rules directly from any student organization.

## VII. Personnel

In his letter of February 10, 1969, Dean Long stated:

Concerning Black resident counselors and resident assistants the following policy will be applied. No color bar exists in regard to

those who may apply for positions on our resident hall staff. The student must have a "C" or better average, his conduct record must be clear, his abilities must commend him to working with and advising other undergraduates, and he must be willing to work under our particular policies. In the past we have hired Black counselors and we shall continue to do so. If Black counselors join our staff, we shall assign them to areas where the greatest number of Black students live. We cannot agree, however, that Black counselors will always deal only with Black students. If the area to which they are assigned houses White students in addition to Black students, they will be responsible for all students in their area. On the other hand, if the particular arrangement for the quarter in question has, in fact, created an all Black area, the Black counselor will be responsible only for Black students.

Under present circumstances, since we assign the Resident Assistants each to Severn and Crissey, we cannot assign such a staff person to work with only Black students. However, we can assign any Black Assistant Resident who might be hired to the building in which the greatest number of Black students is living. Such an Assistant Resident would be responsible for all students in the building in question.

Our position remains the same.

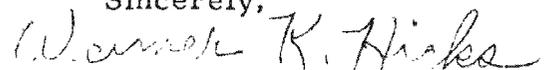
However, recognizing the need to hire a part-time counselor, a staff member who will devote the majority of his time to personal counseling, the College will retain one effective the 1969-70 academic year. This counselor will be Black. In taking this action we fully recognize that Black students face unique adjustment problems.

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The concerns expressed in the BSO demands (racism and internal colonialism) are urgent, deep and pervasive concerns in this society and in all of its institutions. They have been brought into sharp focus on college and university campuses across the nation and at this College as well. They must be attended to, and this attention can be productive of valuable changes in perspective, structures, and the academic curriculum.

In response to the BSO demands we have given continuous and serious consideration to the kinds of changes which are both necessary and possible, now and in the future, in relation to the concerns expressed. These replies have been formulated jointly by Administration and Faculty, and Faculty has gone on record in support of them. Some of the demands are manageable immediately, some in the near future, while some are not consistent with the character and integrity of the liberal arts college and can not be met now or later.

Obviously two weeks of concentrated thought and dialogue is not an end but a beginning. Surely there will need to be continuing re-evaluation in the future. To the business of change the College is and must be dedicated. It can hardly be otherwise. To the BSO and to concerned White students the College owes a debt of gratitude for both vision and candor.

Sincerely,



Weimer K. Hicks  
President