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OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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To: Committee on Instruction

From: Brunetta R. Wolfman

Subject: Brief Review of Dartmouth Black Studies Program

The waves of collegiate Black protest washed over the Dartmouth campus during the 1968-69 academic year and left in its wake an Equal Opportunity program as detailed in the McLane Report and a faculty approved Afro-American Studies Program. On April 16, 1969, three motions, the results of the work of the Afro-American Studies Committee with the assistance of the Afro-American Society, were approved:

- "1. The Faculty endorses the policy of admitting increasing numbers of qualified students from Black and other educationally disadvantaged groups and recognizes its responsibility to provide the necessary instruction to help such students meet Dartmouth's traditional academic standards.
2. On recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Faculty instructs the Committee on Organization and Policy to establish immediately a Committee on Equal Opportunity as recommended in the McLane Report; such Committee to include students, faculty, and administrative representation.
3. The Faculty approved the recommendation of the Committee on Instruction that it establish an Afro-American Studies Program."

The program as approved stated the goal of providing "students with an understanding of the historical, economic, political, social, and artistic experiences of people of African ancestry in the New World and Africa." The program was to be inter-disciplinary incorporating courses from the humanities and social sciences so that students who completed the required six courses would receive a certificate upon graduation. In addition to the academic course, seminars and independent study and field programs

were important aspects of the projected Program.

The Program began in the Fall of 1969 with a Director, a change of name to Black Studies, a faculty Black Studies Committee, no budget provision, and intentions to begin operations in the Winter Term. The initial funding came from Richard King Mellon funds through the Public Affairs Center which also provided space; the Boehm Foundation; the Tucker Foundation; and College Equal Opportunity money. The initial FTEs totaled 4-1/6 which included a Field Supervisor and an Administrative Assistant; subsequently this has dropped to the present 2-5/6 FTE.

During this period, three faculty members have held joint appointments in the Government and English Departments respectively. There has been a provision for a Secretary throughout the period. Student enrollments totaled 52 in the first year, 223 in the second year, and 158 in 1971-72. The number of courses offered has gone from five to sixteen to eighteen in the last year.

The Program's first Director recognized the problems inherent in an area of study which was being politicized across the nation and which had emotional and psychological implications for Blacks and Caucasians. However, it was stressed that Black Studies constituted a new segment of academic endeavor and that Dartmouth had no expertise in the area and was not likely to develop any because of the lack of Black faculty or a Black community to encourage and assist in such development. It was proposed that much of the Program's curriculum focus on the "practical" as exemplified by the field programs: apprenticeship opportunities for Dartmouth students to study under Black scholars based at the Institute

of the Black World in Atlanta; community work and seminars in Boston's Roxbury section under the auspices of the Joint Community-University Center for Inner-City Change; Tucker Foundation's Jersey City project in schools was initially included; off-campus study in Sierra Leone. Another important aspect of the curriculum plan was that of having visiting Black scholars and specialists come to the Dartmouth campus to conduct seminars and give public lectures.

The Program has operated with a Black Studies Policy Committee, sometimes composed of the faculty teaching in the Program and other times composed of the Black Studies staff, and with considerable influence on the part of students who have felt responsibility for the Program and who were in close physical proximity while the Program was housed in the Afro-American Society building. The relationship of the Policy Committee to the Program has not been consistent and has depended on the Director and his perception of the direction the Program should take.

There have been three Directors, each with different academic training and interests and with contrasting views of the Program's relationship to the College and differing styles of operating. The first two Directors were young, administratively inexperienced, in the midst of their own graduate studies and were given a difficult assignment for which they were not prepared or equipped to handle. Perhaps the appointments were made in haste or without an adequate search, but they prevented the Program having a fair start; Black imposed constraints of separation and White acquiescence guaranteed that the Program would not be taken very seriously or given the same kind of consideration that other new programs would be given.

Mismanagement, isolation, discontinuity, and distrust are the logical results of this kind of beginning; it seems quite apparent that new programs can not exist in the Academy unless they are subject to the same privileges and constraints that apply to all segments. The care with which the faculty set up the Native American Studies Program is in direct contrast to the College's Black Studies Program and probably the result of the unsatisfactory aspects of that relationship. In closing, 1972-73 might mark the beginning of a Black Studies Program at Dartmouth based on a consensual understanding of the goals, objectives and methods by which the Program could move into the mainstream and strengthen the academic life and traditions of the College.

BRW/bg

cc: S. Jay Walker